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Item 4 (h) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: Delhi Group on informal sector statistics

Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics, which is presented to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics

1. The Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics commonly known as the "Delhi Group", was set up in 1997 as one of the city groups of the Statistical Commission to address various methodological issues involved in the treatment of the informal sector. The Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, is the Chairman of the Group. A short report of the Group was submitted to the Commission for information at its thirty-seventh session. In the meantime, two more meetings of the Group have been held. A summary of those meetings is given below.

Ninth meeting of the Delhi Group, 2006

2. The ninth meeting of the Delhi Group was held on 11 and 12 May 2006 in New Delhi. The Group discussed a number of issues, such as the informal sector in the updated *System of National Accounts, 1993* (1993, SNA); measuring the contribution of the informal sector to gross domestic product (GDP) and informal employment; measuring the links between poverty and informal employment; and the data quality of surveys on the informal sector and informal employment.

3. The need for active collaboration between the Delhi Group and the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts in updating the 1993 SNA had been discussed in earlier meetings of the Group. The ninth meeting was successful in bringing the Delhi Group and the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts together to discuss issues relating to the updating of 1993 SNA in respect of the informal sector and had thus set the stage for the desired collaboration. Drawing up the road map for the release of the manual on surveys of informal sector and informal employment has been an important achievement.

4. The recommendations made at the ninth meeting included:

(a) The treatment of the informal sector in a separate chapter in the updated 1993 SNA was appreciated. Such inclusion would be an instrument for improvement in national accounts, including by reflecting the informal sector's contribution to GDP;

(b) The Delhi Group endorsed the annotated outline for the chapter on the informal sector in the updated 1993 SNA, as recommended by the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts. In respect of informal employment, the Group suggested examining the issue in a satellite accounting framework;

(c) The Delhi Group supported the initiative taken by the International Labour Organization for the preparation of a manual on surveys of informal sector and informal employment. This would consolidate the work accomplished by the Delhi Group on a conceptual framework for measuring informal sector and informal employment. The manual would highlight concepts, definitions and survey methodologies utilizing best practices and experiences;

(d) Measuring the contribution of the informal sector/informal employment to GDP remained a major challenge. The Delhi Group encouraged further efforts to prepare reliable and, in the longer run, comparable measures. The Group looked forward to the identification of good practices in the prospective manual and in the chapter on informal sector in the updated 1993 SNA. In particular, the Delhi Group stressed that practices that treated the economic activities of the informal sector as a

residual within national accounts should be abandoned and direct sources of information should be given a greater role;

(e) The Delhi Group endorsed the view that the tenth meeting of the Group in Geneva should be devoted exclusively to discussion and finalization of the manual and of the draft chapter on the informal sector in the updated 1993 SNA;

(f) There was a wide gap in the estimates of employment from household and enterprise surveys conducted in India. This, perhaps, was due to inadequate capturing of wage employment/freelancing, a component of informal employment. A methodology suggested by the Central Statistical Organization of India of conducting enterprise surveys that circumvented the problem of non-recognition of wage employees/freelancers was being tested in a few sectors, such as goods transportation by road, advertising, motion picture and video film production. It needed to be tested on a larger scale;

(g) The Group noted the conceptual work undertaken on measuring the links between poverty and informal employment and measuring the contribution of informal sector and informal employment to GDP and the linkage of informal employment and poverty, with specific reference to such vulnerable sections of society as women workers and home-based and street-based workers;

(h) The Delhi Group recognized the innovations as introduced in India in the recent quinquennial labour-force surveys, as regards measuring employment in the informal sector and informal employment and recommended that the innovations be introduced in annual surveys;

(i) The Delhi Group noted the time-use surveys conducted in India and other developing countries. Time-use surveys have the potential to measure the work pattern of the population. They can throw light on the need to improve estimation of work participation rates in labour-force surveys, although they are not a substitute for labour-force surveys. Systematic and sound methodological comparison of the results of time-use surveys and labour-force surveys could be encouraged.

Tenth meeting of the Delhi Group, 2007

5. The tenth meeting of the Delhi Group was organized and hosted by the International Labour Organization from 8 to 10 October 2007 in Geneva. The agenda was as follows:

(a) Manual on surveys of informal sector and informal employment: Progress report;

(b) Discussions on draft chapters 1 to 5 and 10 of the manual

(i) Chapter 1: Introduction;

(ii) Chapter 2: Concepts, definitions and sub-classification;

(iii) Chapter 3: Measurement objectives and data collection strategies;

(iv) Chapter 4: Household surveys on informal sector employment and other types of informal employment;

(v) Chapter 5: Informal sector establishment surveys;

(vi) Chapter 10: Use of data for the preparation of national accounts: labour input matrices and the production approach;

(c) Draft chapter of the updated 1993 SNA on the informal sector;

(d) Alternate aggregation for the informal sector in the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Rev.4 (ISIC, Rev.4).

6. There were extensive deliberations on the papers considered under the items of the agenda. The participants, while approving the broad outlines of the draft chapters and other agenda papers, suggested various changes in terms of their content and structure.

7. The team of contributors that is drafting the manual on surveys of informal sector and informal employment will suitably revise the draft chapters considered in the tenth meeting of the Delhi Group by March 2008. The other four chapters of the manual, namely, chapters 6 to 9 will be drafted by June 2008, and the complete manual will be placed before the Delhi Group at its eleventh meeting.

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Item 4 (i) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: agricultural statistics

Wye Group on statistics on rural development and agriculture household income

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Wye Group on statistics on rural development and agriculture household income. The report is presented to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report of the Wye Group on statistics on rural development and agriculture household income

1. The first meeting of the Wye Group will be held in York, England, in April 2008. The Group was formed as a successor to the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Agriculture Statistics (IWG.AGRI) task force on statistics on rural development and agricultural household income, which held its final meeting in June 2006, following the publication of the handbook entitled *Rural Households' Livelihood and Well-being: Statistics on Rural Development and Agriculture Household Income*.

2. The Group will include between 20 and 30 experts on statistics and economics from national statistics offices, ministries of agriculture, universities and research institutes, who have a shared interest in improving methods for collecting data on the rural environment, communities and farm and non-farm households.

3. The first meeting will discuss the Group's objectives and intended outputs. It will consist of three half-day sessions with a focus on rural statistics, agriculture household income and developing nations. Each session will include a keynote speaker and a number of discussion papers.

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Items for information: environment statistics

Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission, for information, the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics, which reviews the activities undertaken and work accomplished by the Working Group in 2006-2007 and planned outputs and programme of work for 2008 and 2009. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.
** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics

I. Introduction

1. The main objective of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics is to firmly anchor environment statistics as part of official statistics by improving and strengthening basic environmental data, and thus to make an important contribution to the development of environmental indicators, indicators of sustainable development and integrated environmental and economic accounting.

2. The Working Group intends to accomplish this objective by enhancing inter-agency cooperation and by the pooling of knowledge bases and resources in the areas of methodological work, data collection and dissemination, training and capacity-building, and the organization of joint events.

3. At its thirty-seventh session, in March 2006, the Statistical Commission took note of the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics,[1] including its work programme.

4. The 2006-2007 work programme included the following activities:

(a) Methodological and harmonization work in the subject area of water through the Subgroup on Water Statistics;

(b) Revision of the United Nations Statistics Division *Glossary of Environment Statistics*[2] with a view to developing an inter-institutional glossary;

(c) Development of a proposal for harmonized metadata for environment statistics;

(d) Organization of joint training and capacity-building actions on the basis of the shared work programmes of the member organizations;

(e) Establishment of a subgroup on land use and land cover statistics for the discussion of methodological issues in this subject area and preparations for an international work session on land use and land cover statistics in 2007.

5. Section II of the present report describes the progress of work of the Working Group in 2006-2007 according to the areas mentioned in paragraph 2. Section III sets out the planned outputs and work programme of the Working Group in 2008-2009.

II. Progress of work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics

A. Methodological work

6. In accordance with the work programme of the Working Group, the focus of methodological work in 2006 and 2007 remained on water statistics. This work was

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 4* (E/2006/24).

[2] *Studies in Methods, No. 67* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.XVII.12).

carried out by the Subgroup on Water Statistics, which was established by the Working Group in 2005.

7. The Subgroup reviewed the questionnaires used by international organizations (the Statistical Division, Eurostat, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) engaged in the collection of water statistics and worked out a comparison and concordance of the terms, definitions and classifications applied. The System of Environmental Economic Accounts for Water was used in the review as the reference framework. Lists of consistent and different terms were compiled and discussed electronically as well as at a meeting of the Subgroup in September 2006. The Statistical Division/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and OECD/Eurostat questionnaires are being revised as part of the preparations for the 2008 data-collection cycle. The revision will improve consistency between the questionnaires as well as with the standard tables of the System of Environmental Economic Accounts for Water. Remaining inconsistencies, duplications and recommendations for harmonization are being discussed with FAO. The output of this work will be a consolidated list of terms and definitions, classifications, variables and indicators used in water statistics.

8. Work on the application of co-efficients to estimate water use and pollutant emissions, and also on water quality statistics, included the collection of national and international examples and practices. Those compilations, after critical review, will be made available on the Working Group's website.

9. The activities of the subgroup contribute to the ongoing work by the Statistical Division on the development of international recommendations for the compilation of water statistics and accounts.

10. At its sixth meeting, in June 2006, the Working Group agreed on the development of a joint glossary of environment statistics terms used in data collection. It was decided that the work would be implemented within the ongoing revision of the Statistical Division glossary of environment statistics. Four revised chapters of the glossary were circulated and later amended on the basis of comments received from members of the Working Group. Subsequent chapters will be made available for comments in December 2007. The work is expected to conclude in 2008 with the publication of the new joint glossary on the web.

11. The objective of the work on harmonized metadata guidelines for environment statistics is to develop a set of generic core metadata for easy dissemination and exchange of data, taking into account the special characteristics of environment statistics. A comparative analysis of existing metadata standards and those already implemented within partner organizations was carried out and a first draft proposal that also considered ongoing work on common standards for Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange was presented and discussed by the Working Group at its seventh meeting, in June 2007, and at a Eurostat meeting on water statistics in October 2007. A more elaborate proposal will be tested by the Subgroup on Water Statistics in 2008.

12. Due to other priorities and commitments, the establishment of the Subgroup on Land Use and Land Cover Statistics has been postponed to 2008.

B. Data collection

13. The 2006 data collection was implemented by the Statistical Division, OECD and Eurostat in a coordinated manner. The Statistical Division collaborated and shared data with the Economic Commission for Europe and the European Environment Agency in order to avoid duplication of data collection from countries for the Fourth Pan-European State of the Environment Report (the "Belgrade Assessment"). Data collection was jointly implemented by the Statistical Division and OECD in China within the framework of the country's environmental performance review. Data exchange agreements are in place with OECD and Eurostat and have been established with FAO.

14. At its seventh meeting in June 2007, the Working Group also agreed on coordination mechanisms for data-collection activities in 2008 in the countries that are covered by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership instrument. Further discussion is needed with OECD in order to coordinate data-collection activities in the countries that are covered by their accession and enhanced engagement programme.

15. The revision of the questionnaires for the 2008 data-collection cycle is under way. The Statistical Division will send out the joint questionnaire on environment statistics, developed with UNEP, at the end of March 2008. It is planned to circulate the OECD/Eurostat questionnaire to member countries of those organizations in May 2008 (exact time has to be confirmed).

C. Training and capacity-building

16. The Statistical Division, UNEP and the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA) co-organized a training workshop on environment statistics in Ethiopia in July 2007. FAO provided a resource person to the workshop. Another training workshop for the Economic Community of West African States region will be jointly organized by the Statistical Division and UNEP in March 2008. Resource persons from the Statistical Division contributed to workshops organized within the environmental component of MEDSTAT in 2006 and 2007. In 2008 and 2009, there will be further possibilities for collaboration in the European Neighbourhood Partnership countries in the east and south of Europe as well as in Africa.

D. Joint events

17. The international work session on methodological issues of land use and land cover statistics that was planned for 2007 had to be postponed, as the establishment of the subgroup was delayed (see para. 12) and joint work in this area has not yet started.

III. Work programme of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics in 2008-2009

18. In the biennium 2008-2009, the Working Group will focus on:

(a) Continuing methodological and harmonization work in the subject area of water through the Subgroup on Water Statistics and present the results in the form of technical documents that will be made available on the web;

(b) Continuing and finalizing work on the joint glossary of environment statistics and make the glossary available on the web;

(c) Continuing work on a proposal for harmonized metadata guidelines for environment statistics, testing the proposal for water statistics, finalizing the draft on the basis of the lessons learned and make the proposed guidelines available on the web;

(d) Setting up the subgroup, led by FAO, on land use and land cover statistics with a mandate and work programme in order to harmonize the classifications of land use and land cover, to develop a core set of variables and to compile best practices for data collection. The Working Group will reconsider the organization of a joint international work session on land use and land cover statistics after the establishment of the subgroup;

(e) Coordinating the implementation of the 2008 data collection and dissemination programme;

(f) Further developing the Working Group's website in order to make the work more transparent and the results widely available;

(g) Pooling resources by joint training and capacity-building actions in particular in the regions covered by ECA, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and in the European Neighbourhood Partnership countries on the basis of the shared work programmes of the member organizations.

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Items for information: environmental accounting

Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting. The report describes the progress of work of the Committee of Experts, including the current status of the project management framework for the revision of the *Handbook of National Accounting: Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting 2003*; presents the implementation strategy for the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water; and reports on the progress of phase II of the Global Assessment of Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.
** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-eighth session, the Statistical Commission:

(a) Commended the work of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and stressed the importance of the work of the Committee in elevating the level of the *Handbook of National Accounting: Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting 2003* to that of an international statistical standard based on an agreed issues list and taking into consideration consistency with the revision of the *System of National Accounts, 1993* and other revised macroeconomic standards;

(b) Adopted part 1 of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water as an interim international statistical standard, recognizing significant demand from the users' community, and encouraged its implementation in countries;

(c) Requested that the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water be re-evaluated by the Commission at the time the revised *Handbook of National Accounting: Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting* is submitted to the Commission for adoption as an international statistical standard;

(d) Requested the United Nations Statistics Division to develop and submit to the next Statistical Commission an implementation strategy for the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water, taking into account the fact that countries were at different stages of development of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting;

(e) Called upon countries and international agencies to allocate sufficient resources to the revision of the *Handbook of National Accounting: Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting 2003* in their work programme in view of the urgent need for that revision;

(f) Requested the Committee of Experts to develop and submit to the next Statistical Commission a project management framework for the revision of the *Handbook of National Accounting: Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting, 2003* and to report on progress;

(g) Called upon the Committee of Experts to continue, within its mandate, to coordinate with the city groups and other expert groups working in environmental-economic accounting and related statistics;

(h) Encouraged the United Nations Statistics Division and the Committee of Experts to continue to organize user-producer conferences in order to build on the success of the User-Producer Conference on Water Accounting for Integrated Water Resource Management;

(i) Took note of the results of phase I of the Global Assessment of Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting, confirmed its application for assessing the current and planned scope of implementation of the *Handbook of National Accounting: Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting* in countries and welcomed phase II of the Global Assessment in 2007, with a focus on the specific subject areas identified by countries in phase I.

2. Section II below provides an overview of the progress of work of the Committee, in particular concerning the revision of the *Handbook of National*

Accounting: Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting 2003, commonly referred to as SEEA-2003, including the project management framework and the coordination, within the Committee's mandate, of the various groups working on environmental-economic accounting and related statistics; the progress of work of the phase II of the Global Assessment of Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting on specific subject areas; and the strategy for the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW).

II. Progress of work of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

3. At its second meeting, held in New York on 5 and 6 July 2007, the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting discussed the revision of SEEA-2003, including issues on the structure of the revised SEEA-2003, the list of issues in the research agenda and issues that required harmonization. It also discussed the project management framework for the revision of SEEA-2003, the Global Assessment of Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting and the implementation strategy for SEEAW. These topics are discussed in further detail below.

A. Revision of SEEA-2003

4. The Committee of Experts agreed with the list of issues for the research agenda of the revision of SEEA-2003 as presented by the London Group on Environmental Accounting. A complete list of issues will be presented in a background document to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session. Further, the Committee endorsed the recommendations of the London Group on splitting resource rent into income and depletion components and the treatment of mineral exploration.

5. The Committee of Experts agreed, upon the recommendation of the London Group, with structuring the revised SEEA-2003 in three parts: part I, Statistical standard; part II, Non-standard accounts; and part III, Applications. It also agreed that: (a) the discussion on indicators should be limited to part III, Applications; and (b) country examples and compilation issues should be excluded from the revised SEEA.

1. Harmonization issues

6. The Committee of Experts singled out those issues that require coordination between city groups and other expert groups or that require special attention because of the difficulty of finding widely acceptable solutions. These include issues related to energy accounts, material flow accounts as well as the valuation of degradation and are discussed separately below.

(a) Energy accounts

7. The Committee of Experts considered energy accounts as a mature subject matter to be elevated to the level of an international statistical standard. It reaffirmed that energy accounts should constitute an important component of the

standard SEEA. The Committee urged that work on the standardization of concepts, definitions and classifications for energy accounts should start expediently. It requested the United Nations Statistics Division, the London Group on Environmental Accounting and the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics to coordinate their activities closely in order to avoid duplication of work and to ensure the consistency of energy accounts and statistics.

8. The Committee of Experts welcomed the proposal by the United Nations Statistics Division to standardize energy accounts through the preparation of a document on energy accounts. The document would cover all the aspects of energy accounts — flows and stocks, in physical and monetary terms — and present a set of standard tables to be included in the revised SEEA-2003. The Division will take the lead in developing the document in consultation with the London Group and the Oslo Group.

(b) Material flow accounts

9. The Committee of Experts discussed at its last meeting a paper prepared by the Federal Statistical Office, Germany, and Statistics Denmark presenting the conceptual differences between the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidance Manual on Material Flow Accounts and SEEA and suggested a way forward to harmonize the two approaches. The paper identified three issues for harmonization: (a) terminology; (b) economy-wide material flow accounts; and (c) structure of the OECD Manual. The Committee agreed with the recommendations presented in the paper and stressed the importance of harmonizing the OECD Manual on Material Flow Accounts with the concepts of SEEA.

10. The Committee of Experts also recommended: (a) the preparation of a document, SEEA-Material Flow Accounts, building on the OECD Guidance Manual, but fully harmonized with the concepts of SEEA; and (b) the submission of SEEA-Material Flow Accounts document to the Statistical Commission for its adoption. It requested the United Nations Statistics Division, OECD and Eurostat to cooperate in that regard and to jointly publish SEEA-Material Flow Accounts document.

11. Following the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, the United Nations Statistics Division, OECD and Eurostat agreed to proceed with the drafting of the new SEEA-Material Flow Accounts document and the Division appointed a consultant to draft the document. An elaboration of the issues of harmonization will be discussed at the next London Group meeting in December 2007. The draft of SEEA-Material Flow Accounts document is expected to be discussed at the next Committee meeting in the second quarter of 2008 and, upon recommendation of the Committee, it will be submitted to the Statistical Commission for adoption.

(c) Valuation of degradation

12. Valuation of degradation remains one of the most controversial issues in the revision process of SEEA-2003. The Committee of Experts agreed that because of its policy relevance, valuation of degradation should be included in the revised SEEA. However, as the methodologies are not well developed and lack widespread recognition, the valuation of degradation will be addressed in part II of SEEA. A sub-group working on issues related to the valuation of degradation is in the process of being established.

2. Project management framework

13. The Committee of Experts discussed a proposal for the project management framework for the revision of SEEA-2003. The main thrust of the project management framework is to highlight the elements and phases of the revision of SEEA-2003 in order to ensure smooth and transparent process that has broad support in the international statistical community and beyond. National statistical organizations need to be engaged and consulted in all phases of the project. The consultation process is an important component of the work programme and calls for the active involvement of national, regional and international organizations.

14. The project management framework comprises four parts: (a) criteria for inclusion of issues in the research agenda; (b) the governance arrangements, including roles and responsibilities of all groups/organizations involved; (c) the decision-making process and coordination among the different groups involved; and (d) the outline of the work programme, including deliverables, timetable and finance. A summary of the proposal of the project management framework is presented below and the detailed report will be presented in a background document at the thirty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission.

(a) Criteria for inclusion of issues in the research agenda

15. The revision of SEEA-2003 is undertaken with a view to maintaining the fundamental principles of the current system, keeping in mind users' demand and maintaining consistency with other macroeconomic statistical standards such as, the System of National Accounts, Balance of Payments Manual, Government Finance Statistics Manual, Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual, International Standard Classification of all Economic Activities, Central Product Classification, and so on. However, further development and standardization of classifications may be warranted. The revision process will also take into account the feasibility of implementing the guidelines without compromising international comparability. In addition, those issues with demonstrated policy relevance and well-advanced country practices, but for which no methodological consensus is expected, would also be included in part II, Non-standard accounts of the revised SEEA-2003.

(b) Governance arrangements

16. The revision of SEEA-2003 involves many entities whose role and responsibilities are summarized below.

17. The Committee of Experts is the entity that, as delegated by the Statistical Commission, has the responsibility for the revision. The Committee manages and coordinates the revision process. In particular, it ensures appropriate inputs and outputs for the project, including funds and budget, agrees on desired outputs and outcomes according to an agreed timeline with the various technical expert groups working under its guidance, develops and ratifies the overall work plan, schedule and communications strategy. The Committee reports the progress of the revision of SEEA-2003, including progress of the various groups contributing to the revision, to the Statistical Commission, which in turn will be requested to adopt the revised SEEA-2003 as an international statistical standard.

18. City groups and other technical expert groups contribute to the revision of SEEA-2003 by identifying issues to be included in the research agenda for the

revision of SEEA-2003; solving those issues included in the agreed research agenda; and submitting recommendations for change to the Committee of Experts for its final decision. Specific tasks and responsibilities of the city groups and technical expert groups will be agreed with the Committee. Terms of reference for the tasks related to the revision project will be formulated with every relevant expert group and will include deliverables, timelines and a chair to monitor the discussions and to write the recommendations to be submitted to the Committee.

19. The Editor is responsible for drafting the text on the revised SEEA. He/she will be selected by the Committee of Experts from among internationally respected senior statisticians with recognized expertise in environmental-economic accounting and/or national accounts.

20. The secretariat provides logistical and administrative support to the project, including consulting countries, regional and other expert meetings and managing the project website. The United Nations Statistics Division is the secretariat of the project, a responsibility that stems from its role as permanent secretariat of the Committee of Experts.

21. The discussions of the project management framework of the revision of SEEA-2003 lead to a request by the Committee of Experts to develop a clear governance structure for the Committee itself. The proposed governance structure of the Committee will be available as a background document at the thirty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission.

22. The Committee of Experts agreed with the creation of a Bureau to assist the Chair of the Committee to carry out certain tasks under the delegated authority of the Committee. These tasks include reviewing the overall work plan, ensuring that activities and outputs are on track by monitoring progress of the tasks of city groups, technical expert groups and consultants; fund-raising and preparing the budget for the projects under the responsibility of the Committee, liaising with stakeholders, and so forth. The members of the Bureau will be elected from senior officials (heads of statistical offices or deputy heads) from national statistical offices and international organizations. The composition of the Bureau will be presented in the annex to the background document on governance structure of the Committee at the thirty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission.

(c) Decision-making process and coordination

23. The Committee of Experts takes decisions on the scope of the revision and on technical and conceptual issues. The Committee is responsible for ensuring coordination among various city groups and other technical expert groups. The list of issues to be considered for revision will be presented in a background document at the thirty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission.

24. To ensure country involvement and general transparency, all documents for discussion in the meetings of the Committee of Experts will be publicly accessible through its website. Those documents include preparatory papers, minutes of the meetings, and conclusions. After each meeting, conclusions on proposed changes to SEEA-2003 will be circulated to all United Nations member countries for review, with a 60-day response period. To ensure smooth progress, issues on which general agreement has emerged will not be further discussed, unless inconsistency with other decisions on other issues requires further deliberation.

(d) Outline of the work programme for the project

25. The final output of the project is the revised SEEA-2003. Intermediate outputs are recommendations of the technical expert groups and the Committee of Experts.

26. The timetable of the project is currently under discussion and its finalization will depend on the number of issues ultimately included in the research agenda. The Committee of Experts is considering the option of completing the revision in two stages: the first comprising the chapters that constitute the international statistical standard; the second comprising the chapters covering the accounts on which full consensus has not yet been reached and the applications.

27. The project will be financed by contributions in kind from members of the Committee of Experts and partly from a trust fund. The trust fund will mainly finance the participation of experts from the developing countries in the meetings of the Committee as well as in the meetings of city groups and other technical expert groups, the activities of the Editor, some consultancies and the electronic version and index of the revised SEEA-2003. Member States are encouraged to contribute to the trust fund to complement contributions by the international agencies.

B. Coordination

28. As mandated by the Statistical Commission, the Committee of Experts discussed the progress of activities carried out by city groups and other technical expert groups that fall within the Committee's purview. These include activities of the London Group on Environmental Accounting, the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics, the sub-group of the OECD Working Group on Environmental Information and Outlooks working on material flow accounts and the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics.

1. London Group on Environmental Accounting

29. The London Group on Environmental Accounting met in Pretoria from 26 to 30 March 2007. At the meeting, the London Group agreed on a list of issues for the research agenda of the revision of SEEA-2003, on the general structure of the revised SEEA-2003 in three parts, developed a programme of work and assigned the task of addressing different issues on the research agenda to its members or sub-groups established for that purpose.

30. The next meeting of the London Group will take place in Rome from 17 to 19 December 2007. The meeting will discuss issues on the research agenda for the revision of SEEA-2003.

2. Oslo Group on Energy Statistics

31. The Oslo Group on Energy Statistics programme of work includes the drafting of international recommendations on energy statistics. The recommendations contain agreed definitions, classifications, data items, statistical units and compilation guidelines on energy statistics. In addition, it presents country practices and provides operational guidance on how to collect and compile energy statistics and energy balances.

32. The work of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics and the London Group on Environmental Accounting presents many synergies, in particular concerning concepts, definitions and classifications. The Chairs of the two groups are working closely together to ensure proper coordination (see also para. 7 above).

3. OECD Working Group on Environment Information and Outlooks: work on material flow accounts

33. The OECD work on material flows and resource productivity, including the preparation of a guidance document on the implementation and use of material flow accounts is undertaken in response to the OECD Council's recommendation of April 2004 on material flows and resource productivity. The guidance document was drafted by a team of experts under the auspices of the OECD Working Group on Environment Information and Outlooks and in cooperation with Eurostat. The guidance document is close to being finalized and will serve as a basis for the further development of related parts of the revised SEEA-2003.

4. Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics

34. The Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics has focused its activities on water statistics. Its Sub-group has carried out a detailed comparison of classifications, terms and definitions used in the different water-related international data collection with the objective of harmonizing data collection with SEEAW. The Sub-group's objective is to revise the questionnaires by harmonizing terms and definitions with SEEAW.

35. The Intersecretariat Working Group is also working on a glossary of environment statistics and is developing a standard set of metadata for the exchange and dissemination of environment statistics. A new sub-group on land use and land cover statistics, to be led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), will be established to harmonize the classifications of land use and land cover, to develop a core set of variables and to compile best practices for data collection.

5. Joint Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development

36. The Joint Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development is a working group of OECD, Eurostat and the Conference of European Statisticians of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe with the objective of identifying a small set of sustainable development indicators that could be used for the purposes of international comparisons. The group will do this by investigating the commonalities among existing national and international sustainable development indicators sets and comparing them with the indicators that can be derived from a theoretical approach based on capital.

37. The Joint Working Group met in Geneva from 19 to 20 April 2007 and in Bucharest on 8 and 9 November 2007 to discuss its draft report entitled "Statistics for sustainable development: a framework for sustainable development indicators (SDI)". The draft report sets out the conceptual arguments for a capital-based set of sustainable development indicators and discusses the commonalities among existing national and international sets. It will recommend a small set of indicators that is coherent to the fullest extent possible with both. A draft version of the report will be submitted to the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians at its meeting

in February 2008. The final report will be submitted at the full session of the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2008.

C. Promotion and implementation

38. The Committee of Experts has focused its work in the past year on technical and managerial issues mostly linked with the revision of SEEA-2003. This focus was necessary to ensure that the revision process is properly established. The Committee, however, is aware of its important role in promoting environmental-economic accounting in the users' community and in reacting to the strong policy demand in measures beyond gross domestic product to reflect the human impacts on the environment. The Committee, given its unique strategic mandate, has a role in demonstrating the contributions of official statistics to the international debate.

39. During the past year, and as part of its work programme on the promotion of environmental-economic accounts, the Committee of Experts has continued to update and expand its website; has undertaken phase II of the Global Assessment of Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting for specific subjects; and has developed a strategy for the implementation of SEEAW. The latter two activities are discussed below.

1. Progress of work of the Global Assessment of Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting

40. The Global Assessment of Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting is an activity of the United Nations Statistics Division under the auspices of the Committee of Experts: (a) to assess the status of national implementation of environmental-economic accounting and related statistics; (b) to identify priorities and future plans in those areas; and (c) to assess the impeding factors in the collection, compilation and dissemination of environmental-economic accounting and related statistics. The Global Assessment contributes to the development of international standards and recommendations in environmental-economic accounting and related statistics as well as the development of targeted technical cooperation activities in those areas.

41. In order to reduce the burden on countries, the Global Assessment was designed in two phases. Phase I, carried out in cooperation with the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics, covered general information on the programmes of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting; phase II focuses on specific subject areas. Phase I of the Global Assessment was carried out in October 2006. The main conclusions of phase I of the Global Assessment were summarized in the report of the Secretary-General to the thirty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/2007/9) and a detailed report was presented as a background document to the Commission at the same session.

42. As part of phase II, the United Nations Statistics Division, in close cooperation with the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics, carried out the Global Assessment of Energy Statistics and Balances. The objectives of this assessment are: (a) to identify the role of national statistical offices in the national statistical system in collecting, compiling and disseminating energy statistics and energy balances; (b) to assess the scope of energy statistics and balances in countries by identifying the energy sources covered, data collection practices, the use of international guidelines and

classifications as well as the usage of the statistics provided; and (c) to assess the impeding factors in the collection, compilation and dissemination of energy statistics and energy balances. The assessment was dispatched in June 2007 to 210 countries and territories. As of 30 November 2007, 107 countries/territories have responded to the Global Assessment, which corresponds to a response rate of around 50 per cent. The detailed analysis of the Global Assessment of Energy Statistics and Balances will be presented in a background document at the thirty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission.

43. The Global Assessment of Energy Accounts and Air Emission Statistics and Accounts and the Global Assessment of Water Statistics and Accounts have been developed and have been launched in December 2007 to the countries that have indicated in phase I of the Global Assessment that they have a programme on the specific subject area and to those countries that have not replied to phase I.

2. Strategy for the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water

44. This implementation strategy has been prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division in response to the request by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session. The strategy is based on extensive consultation with countries and on drafts of the strategy that were discussed by the Committee of Experts and the London Group on Environmental Accounting as well as at six workshops or training programmes on water accounting held during 2007.

45. The strategy aims at integrating SEEAW into the national policy framework of integrated water resources management and with national statistical systems. It puts great emphasis on linking the implementation of water accounts to users' demand as well as more broadly into national economic policies. The United Nations Statistics Division is working in close collaboration with countries and international agencies building on synergies and existing programmes on integrated water resources management and statistical initiatives to improve water statistics programmes.

46. The implementation strategy comprises the following four components:

(a) Development of international recommendations for water statistics, accompanied by guidelines on supplementary data collection and compilation;

(b) Development of training and promotional material;

(c) Development of a technical cooperation programme consisting of regional activities as well as pilot projects in selected countries in various regions;

(d) Harmonization of international data collection activities with the SEEAW concepts and definitions.

(a) International recommendations for water statistics

47. The United Nations Statistics Division is working on the development of international recommendations for water statistics. These will provide an agreed list of variables and agreed definitions on water statistics that countries are recommended to compile. The list of variables is fully harmonized with the variables of SEEAW but it is more detailed to cover additional variables related to water needed for sector-specific policies and analyses.

48. The international recommendations will be accompanied by practical guidelines, based on best practices, on how to collect and compile the variables as well as on how to populate the international questionnaires and the standard tables of SEEAW. The recommendations and supplementary guidelines are expected to be discussed at an expert group meeting in mid-2008.

(b) Training and promotion

49. In addition to SEEAW and the international recommendations for water statistics, there is a need to develop a promotion and training programme. While SEEAW has gained a foothold of acceptance in the official statistical community it needs to be promoted more broadly in the users' community. Following up on the outcome on the User-Producer Conference on Water Accounting for Integrated Water Resource Management, held in Voorburg, the Netherlands, from 22 to 24 May 2006, organized under the auspices of the Committee of Experts, the United Nations Statistics Division is working in close collaboration with the water community to raise awareness of SEEAW and its features as the information system for hydrological-economic information for integrated water resources management in the users' community.

50. Further, the Division is developing training modules to support the development and strengthening of water statistics programmes and the implementation of SEEAW, based on existing training material developed and used in international workshops and training by the Division. The presentations used in the training are available on the website of the Division.

51. Several activities are being undertaken by the Division in collaboration with various partners. The following are worth noting:

(a) Pilot programme on the implementation of SEEAW, in collaboration with the Global Water Partnership, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), Columbia University and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP);

(b) Training programme on SEEAW in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization-Institute for Water Education (UNESCO-IHE).

52. The United Nations Statistics Division is a member of the UN-Water Task Force on the monitoring and reporting of integrated water resources management. One of the objectives of the Task Force is to promote the use of SEEAW as the information system to develop outcome indicators for integrated water resources management. To that end, a pilot programme on the implementation of SEEAW in four countries will be launched in 2008 as a joint effort of the Global Water Partnership, Columbia University, IUCN, UNDP and the United Nations Statistics Division.

53. UNESCO-IHE carries out training programmes on integrated water resources management on a regular basis. At the invitation of UNESCO-IHE, the United Nations Statistics Division carried out a one-week training on SEEAW as part of the integrated water resources management training in September 2007. The training on SEEAW will again be conducted in 2008 and it is expected that it will become part of the regular curriculum of UNESCO-IHE. The 2008 course may be extended for a period longer than one week in order to better accommodate the diverse range of knowledge and experience of the attendees.

(c) Technical assistance programme

54. There is an increasing demand from countries to develop a technical assistance programme on water statistics and accounting. The United Nations Statistics Division has received official requests for technical assistance from approximately 50 countries following the adoption by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session of SEEAW as an interim international statistical standard. The 50 requests from countries represent a wide range of stages of development of water statistics and accounts and cover Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean.

55. The United Nations Statistics Division technical assistance programme on water statistics and accounting has a strong regional component and is built on close collaboration with the United Nations regional commissions and other international agencies active at the country level, in particular UNDP, the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In addition, the United Nations Statistics Division is building a close cooperation with the Eurostat Regional Programme of Statistics in the Mediterranean Region, phase II (Medstat II), which has a component on water accounts, and with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which have recently been awarded a project for advancing environmental-economic accounting and statistics in their regions.

56. The technical assistance programme consists of regional workshops bringing together countries from the various regions of the world accompanied by technical assistance to pilot countries which should serve as examples for the region. The programme is designed in phases over a period of three years. It is briefly outlined below:

(a) *Phase I.* Introductory regional workshop aimed at raising awareness of SEEAW and getting support for implementation of SEEAW by senior government officials from both user and producer communities. The key aim of the workshop is to have countries understand the usefulness of SEEAW for integrated water resources management policies and commit to the implementation of SEEAW. The workshop will also provide information which will enable countries to begin work on pilot accounts. During this phase, one or two countries in the region would be selected as pilot case studies for the region on the basis of the countries' interest and the existence of suitable primary data, among other things;

(b) *Phase II.* Expert level workshops aimed at sharing experiences in the development of pilot accounts starting from existing information in countries and providing additional tools to assist the production of accounts. Training will be provided on the compilation of water statistics from existing sources as well as on how to populate the standard tables and responding to international questionnaires. A set of standard tables for the region could be developed taking into account common water concerns in the region and availability of data. The pilot country experience could be of help to other countries in the region starting on the implementation of SEEAW;

(c) *Phase III.* Countries will again share experiences in the development of the standard tables for the region so that best practices can be identified in the

compilation of the tables as well as more broadly in the development and enhancement of a water statistics programme.

57. In between workshops countries will be supported by the regional networks, electronic communication and knowledge platforms facilitated by the United Nations Statistics Division and other agencies active in the region.

58. Individual countries will be assisted with the development and strengthening of water statistics programmes as well as the implementation of SEEAW by the United Nations Statistics Division. Advice will be given mainly via e-mail and telephone. Because of resource constraints, only a limited number of country missions can be undertaken by the Division to assist with the implementation of SEEAW and in general will be restricted to pilot countries (see para. 56 above).

(d) Harmonization of international data collection activities

59. There are ongoing efforts to harmonize international data-collection activities with the SEEAW terms and definitions. International data-collection activities on water statistics consist of questionnaires conducted by the United Nations Statistics Division/UNEP and OECD/Eurostat, and FAO. The United Nations Statistics Division/UNEP and the OECD/Eurostat questionnaires are broadly consistent with SEEAW but some adjustments are still needed to fully align them with SEEAW terms and definitions. The FAO questionnaire is broadly consistent with SEEAW for the section that concerns water resources. For the section that concerns water use by the economy, the FAO questionnaire does not follow the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities. Efforts to harmonize the definitions of water statistics variables are under way by the Subgroup on Water Statistics of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics and also by the United Nations Statistics Division via the work on the international recommendations for water statistics.

60. The Division plans to harmonize its water statistics questionnaire with SEEAW starting from the next round of data-collection activities beginning in the spring 2008. It is working with Eurostat and OECD on that activity.

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Items for information: coordination and integration of statistical programmes

Work of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report summarizes the main conclusions of the ninth and tenth sessions of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, held in New York on 26 February 2007, and in Madrid on 10 and 11 September 2007, respectively. The report is submitted for information. The Commission may wish to take into account the views of the Committee in its discussions under relevant agenda items.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

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I. Introduction

1. The main objectives of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA), established in September 2002,[1] are to promote coordination among the statistical programmes of international organizations, to provide coordinated outputs for the treatment of statistical issues in intergovernmental meetings, including the United Nations Statistical Commission, to foster good practices in the structuring and programming of statistical activities in international organizations and, ultimately to achieve an integrated system for data collection through the coordination of activities.

2. In 2007, CCSA chaired by the International Labour Organization, held two sessions: its ninth in New York on 26 February, and its tenth in Madrid on 10 and 11 September 2007. A complete list of the agencies that participated in both sessions is set out in the annex to the present report.

II. Work of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities

A. Statistical training for staff of international agencies

3. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has continued its work on the implementation of the action plan on training of statisticians in international organizations. The IMF website, which provides information on training programmes in international agencies and on training material, was developed and is currently hosted by the United Nations Statistics Division. Progress in the development of e-training programmes was also reviewed. There have been a number of promising initiatives, including: the internal IMF e-training programme; the World Bank's e-learning course on the management of statistical development projects (currently under development); the Development Gateway Foundation's Virtual Statistical System; and two e-courses in statistics that were developed by Statistics Canada and Statistics Finland, respectively.

B. Costs and benefits of the adoption of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange

4. At its ninth session, the Committee adopted Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) as the standard for data and metadata exchange and requested the sponsors to further examine the implications in terms of both resources needed and benefits for the countries and international agencies that decide to implement it. The cost-benefit assessment, based on countries' and agencies' experience was prepared and presented to the Committee at its tenth session. The assessment covered the benefits that would accrue to countries and international agencies that adopted SDMX and the costs associated with its implementation, mainly for technology development and work on the subject-matter domains. The results of the

[1] The Committee was established to continue to carry out the functions previously performed by the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, a subsidiary body of the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

assessment indicated that costs for the implementation would be minor, but that most developing countries would need assistance to build up their capacity before adopting the standards.

5. The Committee agreed that SDMX would be put forward to the United Nations Statistical Commission for its consideration, presenting it as a standard that has been adopted by the Committee and stressing the importance of assisting developing countries in building up their capacity in order to adopt those standards.

C. Work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators on the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6

6. The Committee reviewed progress made by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators in implementing the recommendations made by the Friends of the Chair on Millennium Development Goals Indicators and the ones contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 on statistical capacity-building. In particular, the Statistics Division presented to the Committee a note outlining the work done by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group to improve the compilation of indicators and countries' reporting, and to strengthen the coordination of capacity-building activities in order to assist countries in the production of the necessary data. The Committee commended the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and expressed appreciation for the initiative of including a large number of countries in the process.

7. The Committee urged all CCSA agencies that are members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group, within the context of their mandates and resource availability, to comply with the recommendations made by the Friends of the Chair in their report and those contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6. The Committee also urged its members responsible for the compilation of Millennium Development Goals indicators to comply with the Principles for statistical activities in international organizations.

D. Data imputations by international agencies

8. As a follow-up to the recommendation by the Committee that agencies comply with the recommendations made by the Friends of the Chair in their report and those contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) conducted a review of issues and concerns related to the use of imputations of missing national values in international data series. In particular, Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 calls for avoiding imputation unless specific country data are available for reliable imputations following consultations with concerned countries and through transparent methodologies.

9. The Committee reviewed and discussed the proposals put forward in the paper on how to implement Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 and agreed on the following: (a) the issue of imputation of country data should be included in the quality assurance framework for international statistics; (b) imputations should be clearly flagged out in the database; (c) full transparency of the process and methods

of estimation should be ensured; (d) consultations with national statistical authorities should always be carried out and seen as part of the process to ensure transparency; and (e) the existing CCSA task team on international quality assurance frameworks will review ways to integrate these issues into the frameworks.

E. Use of population estimates

10. As part of the work on the improvement of the quality of data in international sources and increased transparency of methods used by international agencies, the Committee also reviewed issues related to the use of population figures. At its tenth session, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific submitted a note to the Committee on concerns related to the use of population estimates and on the possible underlying reasons for discrepancies among different sets of data used by agencies, which are due in general to the original sources of information and definitions used.

11. The Committee agreed that the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat should engage in more extensive consultations with countries and established a task team with the following mandate: (a) to review and recommend ways to improve consultations with countries that are in the process of producing national estimates; (b) to indicate to agencies how to factor in changes in the population figures from one revision to the next; and (c) to discuss ways to address the concern that there are no internationally agreed standards for annual population statistics.

F. Modalities of data sharing among international organizations

12. On the basis of a report prepared by ECE, the Committee discussed modalities of data sharing among international organizations and related current limitations and problems. The Committee agreed that currently, the exchange of data among agencies is working relatively well. However, recognizing that some issues and limitations still existed, especially in connection with the extent to which data provided by a partner agency can then be reused in other statistical outputs, it was agreed that ECE, in consultation with the World Bank and the European Central Bank, would prepare a paper, to be discussed by CCSA in 2008, that would outline good practices for data exchange among international agencies.

G. Special session on the implementation of quality assurance frameworks

13. In conjunction with its tenth session, CCSA held a special session on implementation of quality assurance frameworks. The objective of the quality assurance frameworks (or frameworks for statistics production) is to establish, in a specific statistical organization, a system of coordinated methods and tools that guarantee adherence to minimum requirements concerning statistical processes and products. Some member agencies presented their initiatives in applying the guidelines prepared by the task team on quality assurance. The Committee agreed

that the Statistics Division should host a web page for the exchange of information on peer reviews that would provide links to the agencies' sites.

14. The Committee agreed to fully endorse the quality guidelines prepared by Eurostat to facilitate the implementation of quality assurance frameworks in international organizations. The frameworks will contribute to the effective compliance by international organizations with the CCSA Principles, thus enhancing the credibility of international statistics.

15. In connection with the implementation of the quality assurance frameworks, the Committee also discussed plans for the next Conference on Data Quality for International Agencies, to be held in Rome in July 2008, immediately after the corresponding Eurostat conference for national statistical offices.

H. Coordination of technical cooperation activities

16. At its tenth session, the Committee also held a special session on statistical capacity-building. At its eighth session, in 2006, the Committee had agreed to form four task teams to further the work on certain specific areas of interest and explore ways for CCSA members to improve the coordination and effectiveness of their initiatives. The teams are as follows:

(a) Task team 1: reporting mechanisms on statistical capacity-building activities, led by the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS21) (ECE, Eurostat, World Tourism Organization, World Bank, Pan-American Health Organization);

(b) Task team 2: capacity-building through regional training initiatives for national statisticians (and regional training centres), led by the United Nations Statistics Division (International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, PARIS21);

(c) Task team 3: review of modalities for the coordination of technical cooperation programmes at the subregional level, led by the World Bank (United Nations Statistics Division, Eurostat, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, African Development Bank, World Tourism Organization);

(d) Task team 4: assessment of the effectiveness of capacity-building activities in Africa, led by the United Nations Statistics Division (World Health Organization, PARIS21, World Bank, African Development Bank).

17. During the special session, the task teams presented the results of their first year of work. The work of task team 1 (convened by PARIS21) received appreciation. The Committee also noted that the work done so far was based largely on the PARIS21 light reporting mechanism and requested that the report for the February 2008 session of CCSA present the task team's progress with respect to all of its terms of reference. Task team 2 presented an inventory of training activities and centres. Given that activities by international agencies normally would be reported by task team 1 and that other regional initiatives would be covered by task team 3, the Committee agreed that this task team would focus only on training centres with a regional reach, including both regional centres and national centres that provide training to official statisticians from outside the country.

18. In connection with this agenda item, other agencies presented their initiatives for the development of training tools. In particular, the World Bank presented an update of its project for the development of an e-learning course on investing in statistical capacity. The course is intended for those who have responsibility for the management of statistical capacity-building activities in developing countries. Eurostat also introduced its "Guide to Statistics in EC Development Cooperation", which had been developed to provide support to European Commission staff in using statistics and indicators in their development programmes, identifying and designing activities for statistical capacity-building and in understanding statistics for policymaking.

19. Task team 3 reported that progress had not been made on agreeing on a set of recommendations for good practices in the design and management of technical cooperation programmes to be put forward for consideration by CCSA. The Committee agreed that task team 3 would prepare a brief report for the February 2008 session and a more extensive one for the September 2008 session.

20. Finally, task team 4 presented the results of the first phase of its work. The lead agency compiled a list of areas and related elements to monitor statistical capacity by both quantitative and qualitative indicators. The Committee agreed that the number of areas considered in the assessment was too large and that the focus should be on quantitative indicators only. The Committee agreed that the African Development Bank, given the work already being undertaken by it in this area, would take the lead, together with the Economic Commission for Africa, in continuing the work of this task team.

I. Review of the functions of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities

21. At its tenth session, the Committee reviewed its functions and ways of operating, on the basis of a note prepared by the chair, ILO, and the secretariat, the United Nations Statistics Division. The proposals to the Committee were organized in five areas as follows:

Membership and level of representation

22. The Committee discussed whether membership should be extended to any agency/organization with statistical activities, whether all members should have equal status and at what level the agency should be represented in the Committee. It was agreed that the current list of members should be maintained and that requests for new memberships could be assessed on the basis of the new terms of reference and objectives of CCSA, to be redrafted and approved later. Any member will be free to opt for an observer status. The Committee members further agreed and strongly encouraged, that the level of representation should be maintained at the level of Director.

Activities and meetings

23. The Committee reviewed issues related to the organization of its meetings and side events. It agreed that side events would have to be limited in number and would have to be organized by the relevant agencies with no assistance from the secretariat. On the presentation of items during the regular sessions, the Committee

agreed that there should be a clear distinction between items for discussion and items for information and that there should be no fixed time limit for the presentation and discussion. The Committee also agreed that in between sessions, the secretariat should remind members of their commitments to produce outputs and reports, as agreed at the CCSA meetings.

Decision mechanisms

24. The Committee agreed that consensus would be determined by the chair, as reported in the minutes of the meeting. A suggestion was also made to include a list of actions by members or task teams agreed on by the Committee at each session.

Reporting

25. The discussion focused on whether CCSA should report to other entities, such as the United Nations Statistical Commission or the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, and on whether or not the Committee should have an identity as a body. There was agreement that CCSA should not be formally accountable to the Statistical Commission. However, it was agreed that CCSA should report back to the Commission to communicate important decisions and key issues and that its work and decisions should be recognized. It was also agreed that there was a need for the Committee to be more visible. In this respect, it was agreed that all members should give the chair special recognition at events organized by them.

Management and organization

26. The Committee reviewed and discussed the current way of operating of the chair and the secretariat and agreed on the proposal of a two-chair system. It further agreed that there would be no financial assistance to the secretariat, but that on an ad hoc basis the secretariat could seek the assistance of other members. The task teams will continue to operate as they currently do, and the outputs they produce will remain the property of the task team members only. Finally, the Committee agreed that the secretariat and the co-chairs would redraft the terms of reference, which would include both a mission statement and a vision statement. The draft will be circulated to the members for their written suggestions and corrections. The new terms of reference would then be adopted by the Committee at its session in February 2008.

J. Other issues

27. At its tenth session, the Committee was informed by OECD of the outcome of the second OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, during which participants had discussed ways to measure progress in societies.

28. The Committee considered the need to revise the current classification of statistical activities and agreed that the Statistics Division, assisted by the regional commissions and OECD, would propose a revised classification.

Annex

Participating agencies and offices

Ninth meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (New York, 26 February 2007)

United Nations entities, programmes and funds

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Statistics Division

United Nations Population Division

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Economic Commission for Europe

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

United Nations Children's Fund

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Development Programme/Human Development Report

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Population Fund

Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organization

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

World Health Organization

PAHO/World Health Organization

World Bank

International Monetary Fund

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

World Trade Organization

Other international and non-governmental organizations

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Eurostat

Inter-State Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States

African Development Bank

Asian Development Bank

European Central Bank

PARIS21

Economic Community of West African States

Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics

Caribbean Community

Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries

Tenth Meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (Madrid, 10-11 September 2007)

United Nations entities, programmes and funds

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Statistics Division

United Nations Population Division

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Economic Commission for Europe

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Population Fund

Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organization

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

World Health Organization

World Bank

International Monetary Fund

World Tourism Organization

World Trade Organization

International Atomic Energy Agency

Other international and non-governmental organizations

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Eurostat

Inter-State Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States

African Development Bank

European Central Bank

PARIS21

Bank for International Settlements

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Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the PARIS21 (PARIS21) on statistical capacity-building. The report, which is presented to the Commission for information, outlines PARIS21 efforts to promote the use of better statistics as a central part of the enabling environment for development progress, particularly through support to countries in the design, implementation and monitoring of national strategies for the development of statistics, through advocacy and by encouraging donor collaboration in statistical support programmes. The Commission may wish to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report of the Steering Committee of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century on statistical capacity-building

I. Introduction

1. The overall goal of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS21) is to develop a culture of evidence-based policymaking and implementation that serves to improve governance and government effectiveness in reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. PARIS21 focuses its efforts on assisting developing countries in the design, implementation and monitoring of national strategies for the development of statistics in order to have, inter alia, nationally owned and produced data for all Millennium Development Goals indicators and all development policy needs by 2010.

2. A national strategy provides a country with a focus for strengthening statistical capacity across the entire national statistical system. The national strategy will provide a vision for where the national statistical systems should be in five to 10 years and will set milestones for getting there.[1]

II. Progress of PARIS21 in 2007

3. PARIS21 supports national strategy processes primarily through the following types of activities: (a) advocacy and the development of statistical advocacy tools; (b) regional programmes; (c) promotion of donor collaboration; (d) development of national strategies methodology; and (e) satellite programmes. Progress made in 2007 under these activities is provided below.

A. Advocacy and the development of statistical advocacy tools

4. PARIS21 advocacy efforts include targeted interventions at specific international and regional meetings and the production of tools. An encouraging development resulting from PARIS21 advocacy interventions includes a scaling-up of investment in national statistical systems (see para. 12). Among the advocacy tools produced by PARIS21 in 2007 are the following:

(a) A booklet entitled "Counting down poverty: the role of statistics in world development", which shows the vital role of statistics in development and poverty reduction;

(b) A booklet template entitled "Why does country X need good statistics", which targets government and donor support. Tailored booklets have been produced for Gabon, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania and the United Republic of Tanzania, in collaboration with each country's national statistical office.

[1] For a more detailed discussion of national strategies for the development of statistics, see E/CN.3/2005/18.

B. Regional programmes

5. PARIS21 regional programmes are focusing increasingly on country-based activities and include various components, such as the promotion of partnership; the mobilization of technical and financial resources; and on-demand advisory services to countries. Among its achievements in 2007, PARIS21 was instrumental in securing an agreement to create a Central American regional statistical commission. In addition, with the assistance of PARIS21 and other partners, all Central American and Andean countries have finalized the design of their national strategies and are starting the implementation process. The clearest example of the power of PARIS21, however, may be the case of the national statistical office in Niger, where PARIS21 provided a full range of on-demand support. PARIS21 provided advice on the design of the country's national strategy, helped the country secure funding for the process through the World Bank's trust fund for statistical capacity-building, assisted the country in including the national strategy in its national poverty reduction strategy and supported the country's case at a donor consultative group meeting.

C. Promotion of donor collaboration

6. PARIS21 convenes an inter-agency task team whose function is to report on donor support for statistical capacity-building. The team evolved out of a pilot project (the "Light reporting exercise") that PARIS21 had conducted in 2005-2006 in sub-Saharan Africa.[2] In 2007, the team, now dubbed the "Partner reporting system on statistical development", produced a review of existing partner reporting systems, a classification of statistical activities, a typology of financial and non-financial partner support for statistics and a study on the suitability of using the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development creditor reporting system to extract information on support for statistical development. The team is currently considering a proposal for a refined, updated version of the reporting exercise drawing heavily on the creditor reporting system. These points will be discussed in greater depth within the Bureau of the PARIS21 Steering Committee in January 2008 and at the February 2008 session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities.

D. Development of methodology for a national strategy for the advancement of statistics

7. In close collaboration with its partners, PARIS21 produces methodological guidance for countries interested in pursuing strategic planning for statistics.[3] Among the papers produced in 2007 were the following:

(a) "Mainstreaming sectoral statistical systems in Africa: a guide to planning an integrated national statistical system", which provides guidance to the staff of national statistical offices and of sectoral statistical offices on how to work together to mainstream sectoral statistical systems into national statistical systems;

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[2] For a more detailed discussion of the light reporting exercise, see E/CN.3/2007/25.

[3] Documents are available from http://www.paris21.org/knowledgebase/.

(b) "A guide to using a system-wide approach to implement national strategies", which outlines why scaling up investment in national statistical systems is needed and provides operational guidance for national statistical system managers and funders on how to use a system-wide (or programme-based) approach to support the strengthening of national statistical systems (see para. 12 for more information).

E. Satellite programmes

8. The PARIS21 secretariat oversees the implementation of two satellite programmes: the International Household Survey Network and the accelerated data programme in pilot countries. Both programmes were quite active in 2007.

9. The International Household Survey Network has two primary objectives: (a) to promote the better use of survey microdata; and (b) to improve the quality of future surveys. The Network has developed or is in the process of developing three tools to be implemented by the accelerated data programme, namely, the microdata management toolkit, a survey question bank, and the survey quality assessment framework.

10. To strengthen country capacity in producing statistical data relevant for policy design, monitoring and evaluation, the accelerated data programme undertakes three main tasks: (a) documentation, preservation and dissemination of existing survey microdata; (b) analysis of existing survey data and assessment of past survey programmes; and (c) development of improved survey programme and data collection. A combination of the tasks has been carried out in 24 pilot countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. A further seven countries have expressed interest in participating in Programme activities. Among the lessons learned so far are that (a) microdata production is vast and hidden; (b) microdata dissemination is limited and mostly ad hoc; and (c) there is a high demand from countries for technical tools, policy guidelines and training.

11. The Metagora project, also hosted within the PARIS21 secretariat, focuses on methods, tools and frameworks for measuring human rights and democratic governance. In 2007, an independent panel of experts completed its evaluation of the project's implementation and outcomes and produced an assessment report that presents Metagora's strengths and technical shortcomings and formulates a number of important recommendations aimed at enhancing the project's scientific, technical and professional basis. The second phase of Metagora is being shaped by these recommendations. Furthermore, throughout 2007, special attention was put on advocacy activities and a set of Metagora training materials were released through the web.

III. Future directions of the work of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century

12. In 2008, PARIS21 will partner with international institutions, regional organizations and bilateral donors in a scaling-up of investment to national statistical systems. This will involve applying a system-wide approach, drawing lessons from the sector-wide approaches used successfully in such areas as health, education and agriculture. In general, applying a system-wide approach to statistics

involves using the national strategy as a framework for coordination both across sectors and between donors. The aim is to make donor assistance coherent and to reduce transaction costs by setting out the objectives and results to be achieved and by establishing common mechanisms for implementation, monitoring progress and reporting.

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Report of the International Labour Organization

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the International Labour Organization on updating the International Standard Classification of Occupations and plans to implement the updated classification. The report is submitted to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

07-64703 (E) 030108

Report of the International Labour Organization on the updated International Standard Classification of Occupations

I. Recommendation of the Statistical Commission on the International Standard Classification of Occupations

1. In discussing the report provided by the International Labour Office on progress in updating the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) (E/CN.3/2007/11), the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session:[1]

(a) Agreed with the draft structure of the Classification as a suitable standard for internationally comparable statistics;

(b) Noted that draft definitions of the proposed categories of the Classification and language versions of the Classification were important prerequisites for its successful implementation;

(c) Took note of the forthcoming steps to be taken in the formal process to approve the Classification;

(d) Requested the International Labour Office to report to the Commission in 2008.

II. Status of the work on updating the International Standard Classification of Occupations

A. Background

2. Work on updating ISCO was mandated in a resolution of the seventeenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2003. In that resolution, endorsed by the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in March 2004, ILO was requested to update ISCO by late 2007 and to convene a meeting of experts to adopt the classification and make appropriate recommendations to the Governing Body.

3. The work was scheduled for completion to allow sufficient time for the updated classification, or national adaptations of it, to be available for use in the 2010 round of national population censuses. The request that the ILO timetable for the revision of ISCO meet the needs of the next census round was made at the thirty-fourth session of the Statistical Commission, in March 2003.[2] At the thirty-fifth session of the Commission, held in March 2004, ILO made a commitment to complete the work by 2007, with the expectation that the updated classification would be presented to the Commission at its meeting in March 2008.[3]

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[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.B., decision 38/108.

[2] Ibid., *2003, Supplement No. 4* (E/2003/24), chap. V. para. 2 (i).

[3] Ibid., *2004, Supplement No. 4 and corrigendum* (E/2004/24 and Corr.1), chap. V, para. 4 (h).

4. A meeting of experts on labour statistics on updating ISCO was duly convened by the ILO Governing Body from 3 to 6 December 2007. The deliberations of the experts were based on a report prepared by ILO in its working languages English, French and Spanish.[4] The experts evaluated an updated classification structure and made a small number of amendments to it, then adopted a draft resolution endorsing the classification structure, which was annexed to the draft resolution.

5. The report of the meeting of experts, including the draft resolution and the classification structure, was made available in English, French and Spanish on the ILO website before the end of 2007. The updated classification is known as the International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008 (ISCO-08). It will be available to the Commission at its thirty-ninth session as a background document.

6. The main purposes and uses of ISCO are to provide:

(a) A basis for the international reporting, comparison and exchange of statistical and administrative data about occupations;

(b) A model for the development of national and regional classifications of occupations;

(c) A system that can be used directly in countries that have not developed their own national classifications.

7. Occupational classifications are used in national contexts for the collection and dissemination of statistics from population censuses, household surveys, employer surveys and other sources. They are also used by Governments and companies in such activities as matching job seekers with job vacancies, educational planning, reporting of industrial accidents, administration of workers compensation and the management of employment-related migration. Globalization of the labour market is increasing the demand for internationally comparable occupational information for both statistical and administrative purposes, and highlights the need for a robust and contemporary framework for the reporting and exchange of information about occupations.

B. Work undertaken by the International Labour Organization

8. In updating ISCO, ILO consulted as widely as possible with stakeholders and interested parties. This was done mainly by means of two questionnaires that were sent to all countries through their labour ministries, national statistical institutes, employment services, vocational training institutes and employers' and workers' organizations and by circulating successive drafts of the updated classification structure for comment. ILO also consulted with a range of specialized agencies and stakeholders with an interest in those occupational groups where the most updating was needed.

9. An important element in the success of the work was the establishment of a Technical Expert Group for updating ISCO to provide ILO with advice on and assistance in the updating work. The group is made up of national experts in occupational classification from all regions of the world, as well as experts from

[4] Documentation for the meeting of experts is available at http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/techmeet/index.htm.

relevant international agencies. It has met five times between November 2005 and December 2007 and conducts its business electronically between sessions.

10. The work undertaken by ILO also benefited strongly from its consultations with and the valuable advice provided by the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications. Reports on progress and on draft classification structures were presented and discussed at the meetings of the group held in June 2005 and April 2007.

11. On the basis of suggestions made by the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications and the Technical Expert Group for updating ISCO, as well as taking into consideration the comments received from many other sources, ILO made a number of changes in the draft classification structure provided to the Commission for comment in February 2007. A final draft was circulated to the Technical Expert Group members and other experts in July 2007 and released in September 2007 as part of the report for the meeting of experts.[4]

12. Major issues that were addressed in the updating work include:

(a) The impact of information and communications technology on the occupational structure of the labour market;

(b) The need for improved coverage of health occupations;

(c) User requests for more detail in agricultural, forestry and fishery occupations;

(d) The need to improve the groupings for managerial occupations;

(e) Concerns that ISCO-88 is very detailed for some technical and manufacturing occupations but has much less detail, especially at intermediate levels of aggregation, for clerical and service-related occupations where a large percentage of persons employed are female;

(f) Concerns about the existence of parallel groups at different skill levels for occupations that involve the performance of similar or identical tasks;

(g) The need for improved coverage of occupations that predominate in the informal sector and that have lower skill requirements;

(h) The need to refresh and update definitions of all categories;

(i) The need for the ISCO index to be improved and updated.

C. Main changes in the Classification

13. Although the conceptual model underpinning ISCO-08 remains essentially the same as that used in ISCO-88, there have been some changes in the way the model is used to design the classification. The most notable change is that, since the nature of the work performed has been given more emphasis than the formal education and training required in determining the skill level of an occupation, there is no need for parallel groups in different major groups to allow for cases where the educational and training requirements for a particular occupational group differ from one country to the next.

14. Wherever possible, efforts have been made to ensure that the level of detail provided is appropriate and useful considering the main purposes of an international classification. Given the nature of the occupational distribution of the labour market at the international level, however, and the variety of uses of ISCO, the issues of the sizes of groups and differing levels of detail in different parts of the classification were seen as important, but not overriding, considerations.

15. In some cases there were concerns that it was not feasible to make distinctions between certain categories in ISCO-88 on a consistent basis internationally, especially considering the kind of data that it is possible to collect in a census or in surveys. In such cases as the treatment of managerial occupations in agriculture, adjustments have been made that aim to improve international comparability and consistency of reporting.

16. Some of the more significant changes are summarized below:

(a) The sections of the classification dealing with managerial occupations have been reorganized so as to overcome problems with the distinction between corporate managers and general managers experienced by users of ISCO-88;

(b) Occupations associated with information and communications technology have been updated and expanded, allowing for the identification of professional and associate professional occupations in this field at the second level of the classification;

(c) There is improved coverage of health services occupations, providing sufficient detail to allow ISCO-08 to be used as the basis for the international reporting of data on the health workforce to the World Health Organization and other international and intergovernmental organizations;

(d) The section of the classification dealing with clerical support workers has been reorganized to reflect the increasing impact of information and communications technology on the organization of clerical work and to provide more meaningful detail for occupations in which a large number of women are employed;

(e) The aggregate groupings for sales and service workers have been reorganized and include new groups at the second level of the classification for personal service, personal care and protective services workers;

(f) There is more detail and greater clarity in the treatment of some occupational groups involved in agriculture, and provision is made to allow separate identification at the second level of the classification of skilled agricultural workers apart from forestry, fishery and hunting workers;

(g) More detailed categories are available for occupations involved in the provision of information and services to clients, including those related to tourism;

(h) The groups for plant and machine operators have been rationalized in response to concerns that this part of ISCO-88 was excessively detailed and out of date in some areas;

(i) There is extended coverage of occupations that are significant in informal employment and an associated increase in the number of sub-major groups in ISCO major group 9, Elementary occupations;

(j) Thematic (or alternative) groupings will be provided primarily on the basis of the goods or services produced, independent of skill level.

D. Planned future work

17. ILO will provide support for implementation of the updated ISCO from 2008 in order to ensure that ISCO-08, or national adaptations of it, can be used in the round of national population censuses to be conducted beginning in 2010.

18. Those plans include the publication of ISCO-08 in book form in English, French and Spanish and its release in electronic form on the ILO website; preparation of a manual and training material on how to adapt the updated classification for use in national and regional settings; provision of training on a regional basis through a series of regional workshops; provision of technical assistance and advice directly to countries; and assistance with and review of national classification/ISCO-08 correspondence tables. The exact timing of these activities will be dependent on resource availability.

19. Explanatory material describing the conceptual framework of the classification, definitions of categories, an updated index and an ISCO-88/ISCO-08 correspondence table have been developed in draft form as part of the development work. They will be finalized as soon as possible, in close consultation with the Technical Expert Group for updating ISCO, and will be included in the publication as well as on the ILO website.

20. The final draft definitions will be loaded to the ILO website progressively for comment before they are finalized in English. French and Spanish versions will be available once translations are completed.

21. The existing ISCO-88 index in English has been mapped to the final draft classification structure as part of the process of finalizing the structure. A number of redundant entries have been removed and commonly used terms that were not included have been added, including cases where there are new titles for new and emerging occupations. Once the index has been adjusted to reflect the final changes made in the classification structure at the meeting of experts, members of the Technical Expert Group for updating ISCO will be invited to suggest additional new index entries. It is hoped that as a result, the index will be as up to date and comprehensive as possible and that it will serve as a useful model for the development of national occupational coding indexes. A similar exercise will be conducted for the French and Spanish versions.

22. It is intended that the Technical Expert Group for updating ISCO will continue to function and will provide advice to ILO on issues associated with the implementation of ISCO and on the need for further updates or revisions, as well as serving as a focal point for international discussion on issues associated with occupational classification.

23. **The Statistical Commission may wish to take note of the report of the International Labour Organization, in particular:**

(a) **The conduct of the work undertaken to complete the development of ISCO-08;**

(b) The structure of ISCO-08 (provided to the Commission for information as a background document) endorsed in December 2007 by the meeting of experts and its suitability for use as a model for the development of national classifications and as the basis for the provision of internationally comparable statistics;

(c) That ILO plans to support implementation of ISCO-08 in national and regional statistical activities.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report describes the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators in 2007 and the United Nations Statistics Division, in its capacity as coordinator of the Group, in the following areas: improvement of the coverage, transparency and reporting on all indicators as presented in the database on all Millennium Development Goals; implementation of the recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 on strengthening statistical capacity, adopted in July 2006; coordination of data collection at the global level; and preparation of the yearly analysis and reports on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The report is presented for information. The Statistical Commission may wish to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-seventh session, the Statistical Commission requested the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators to take into account the relevant recommendations of the friends of the Chair to improve further the compilation of the indicators used in the monitoring of the Goals and report to the Commission on progress achieved (see E/2006/24, chap. I.C, decision 37/111). Moreover, in July 2006, the Economic and Social Council adopted its resolution 2006/6 on strengthening statistical capacity in countries and included a set of recommendations to improve the coverage, transparency and reporting on all indicators. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group has, since then, been working to implement the recommendations of the friends of the Chair and those contained in the Council resolution. The present report outlines the progress made to address all the concerns raised and the activities undertaken by the Group in 2007.

2. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders committed themselves to achieving four targets additional to the ones included in the Millennium Declaration.[1] The Inter-Agency and Expert Group undertook work to identify the most appropriate indicators to monitor progress towards the new targets. The present report describes the work done in this area and developments in the area of Millennium Development Goals monitoring. The annexes to the report contain information on the revised Millennium Development Goals monitoring frameworks (annex I), an assessment of country data availability in the Millennium Development Goals indicators database (annex II) and a summary of the recommendations by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group at its 12th meeting (annex III).

II. Revised framework for the global monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals

3. Since 2002, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals has been regularly monitored on the basis of the Millennium Development Goals monitoring framework, as agreed by the General Assembly in 2001 in its resolution 56/95. In September 2006, the Secretary-General, in paragraph 24 of his report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1), recommended the incorporation of the four new targets, as derived from the World Summit Outcome, and indicated that the technical work for the selection of the appropriate indicators would be undertaken by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators. Following the recommendations by the Secretary-General, the Group initiated work to identify the most appropriate indicators to monitor progress in the four new targets. The work was undertaken through the Group's thematic subgroups in the respective areas of responsibility.

4. The recommendations of the subgroups were reviewed and discussed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and presented to the Office of the Secretary-General for inclusion in his report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. The new framework, containing the four new targets, originally recommended for inclusion by the Secretary-General in his 2006 report, and the related indicators, as recommended by the Group at its last meeting, in March 2007, was presented to the

[1] See resolution 55/2.

Assembly in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/62/1). Member States took note of the report and the new framework will be used to prepare for the next round of global assessment of progress in 2008.

5. In considering the new indicators, the responsible agencies within the Inter-Agency and Expert Group have been working to provide the data and metadata according to the recommendations made by Member States at previous sessions of the Statistical Commission and of the Group, to ensure the use of the most appropriate methodology and full transparency in the estimates and adjustments made to the data provided by countries.

III. Improving data quality and transparency of methods

6. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group has continued its work to enhance the quality of data and metadata used for the global monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals and to ensure full transparency in the methods used to adjust country data for international comparability and to estimate missing values. On the basis of the recommendations made by countries at the Group meetings in 2005 and 2006, the following areas were addressed:

(a) Identify ways to improve coordination within the national statistical system and countries' reporting mechanisms to the international agencies, in a continuous effort to reduce data gaps and data discrepancies between national and international sources;

(b) Address key methodological issues, including the use of population figures, in the computation of the indicators and regional aggregates;

(c) Continue to improve the content and structure of the metadata and the tools available on the mdgs.un.org website.

7. In order to address the first point, the Statistics Division of the Secretariat undertook a survey, directed at countries participating in the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group, to better understand existing ways of coordination within national statistical systems and reporting mechanisms to the international statistical system on Millennium Development Goals indicators and to identify shortcomings and deficiencies in the communication between national statistical authorities and international agencies. The results of the survey were reviewed and discussed at the 12th meeting of the Group in November 2007. The results, although limited in coverage, were used as a basis to recommend further work in this area. In particular, national statisticians in the Group recommended:

(a) That the Statistics Division revise the questionnaire and expand the survey to a larger number of countries;

(b) That the Group, coordinated by the Statistics Division, hold a workshop to review countries' experiences in coordination and reporting mechanisms, identify best practices and develop guidelines for countries.

8. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group also agreed that steps should be taken to reduce data gaps and the inconsistencies between the data available in national sources and used for national monitoring, on the one hand, and the ones available in international data series and used for global monitoring, on the other hand. To this end, it was agreed to involve regional commissions more extensively in data

checking purposes and in serving as a liaison between international agencies and national statistical systems by channelling and following up on specific queries on data and metadata.

9. National statisticians in the Inter-Agency and Expert Group had previously agreed that imputations, if produced with the full involvement of the national statistical system and when accompanied by clear and transparent metadata, are useful to countries because they can be used when no official statistics are available. Statistical teams in the regional commissions will help establish mechanisms to facilitate countries' involvement in the estimation and adjustment of national data and promote more extensive consultation processes between countries and international agencies.

10. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group has also continued the review of methodologies for the production of Millennium Development Goals indicators and has addressed important methodological issues. One such issue relates to the use of population figures in the computation of the indicators and in the aggregation of national values to regional and global figures. The Statistics Division conducted a survey among all agencies producing Millennium Development Goals indicators to better understand what population figures are being used and issues of discrepancies. The Group reviewed and discussed the results and made specific recommendations. It was agreed that efforts should be made to improve the consultation process between the Population Division of the Secretariat and the national statistical offices.

11. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group has also devoted increased attention to ensure the achievement of the desired levels of consistency and transparency in reporting and presenting data and metadata for the international monitoring. In this respect, the Group has agreed that the adoption of the common platform for data exchange, the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) would be a good technical solution to this issue. The Group has established a task team on SDMX, which has already initiated its work to develop the data structure for Millennium Development Goals indicators to be used to exchange data and metadata among agencies.

IV. Enabling countries to have the necessary data and methodologies to monitor Millennium Development Goals at the national level

12. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group has continued to work to help ensure that countries have access to the necessary tools to monitor the Millennium Development Goals at the national level. In particular, in 2007, it has agreed to produce a revised version of the handbook on indicators, which will also be available online, and an upgrading of the website and the presentation of the metadata. It has also initiated a discussion with the countries in the Group to address other important issues related to monitoring at the national level, in particular:

(a) The need for data to inform policies on Millennium Development Goals and related monitoring of progress at the subnational level;

(b) The need to develop tools to assess progress in the various goals and targets at the national level.

V. Outputs by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators in 2007

13. On the basis of the inputs provided by the various responsible agencies, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat published the Millennium Development Goals report 2007.[2] The report was launched in July 2007 by the Secretary-General at the opening of the Economic and Social Council, and used to inform the political debate at the high-level segment of the Council in July and in the General Assembly in September 2007. The report was translated in all official languages and launched at regional and subregional events in various countries around the world.

14. The assessment of progress based on regional aggregates was also presented in the Millennium Development Goals: 2007 progress chart. The colour-coded chart, produced for the fourth consecutive year, presents an assessment of regional trends and indicates regions and subregions that are on- or off-track in the achievement of the Goals. It is easy to read and is intended for wide dissemination.

15. A brief report on the Millennium Development Goals in Africa was also launched by the Deputy Secretary-General in June, timed to coincide with the opening of the Group of 8 (G-8) Summit in Germany. At the Summit, the Secretary-General put forward for discussion the question of implementation of the Goals in sub-Saharan Africa.

16. The Statistics Division also prepared data and analysis for the aforementioned 2007 report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization and its statistical annex. The Division has continued to maintain the website and database of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (http://mdgs.un.org).

17. In September 2007, the Statistics Division, in collaboration with the DevInfo group, issued the third edition of MDGInfo, an adaptation of DevInfo, a technology specifically designed to support Governments in Millennium Development Goals monitoring. MDGInfo is intended to facilitate access to the database and the Millennium Development Goals Report by users with limited access to the Internet and aims at supporting Member States in the use of common database systems and platforms.

VI. Conclusions and way forward

18. **The Statistics Division, in its role as coordinating agency of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, will continue to work with the agencies and countries to improve the coverage, transparency and reporting on all Millennium Development Goals indicators and to assist countries with the production and use of data for national monitoring.**

19. **The Statistical Commission may wish to note the work done by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and the Statistics Division in 2007 in implementing the recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council**

[2] *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2007* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.I.15).

resolution 2006/6 on strengthening statistical capacity, adopted by the Council in July 2006, and the proposed next steps:

(a) Continue to ensure that country participants regularly attend the fall meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and advise the Group and the Statistics Division on their work to continuously improve the metadata and the methodologies used in estimates and imputations, and on ways to improve the effectiveness of capacity-building activities;

(b) Initiate work with the regional commissions to review, in consultation with countries, estimates and country data adjustments produced by international agencies and identify ways to resolve discrepancies between international and national data;

(c) Assist countries in identifying best practices for coordination within national statistical systems and reporting mechanisms to the international statistical system and formulate the related guidelines.

Annex I

Revised Millennium Development Goals monitoring framework, including new targets and indicators

Millennium Development Goals	
Goals and targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	*Indicators for monitoring progress*
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 a day	1.1. Proportion of population below $1 purchasing power parity (PPP) per day[a]
	1.2. Poverty gap ratio
	1.3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people	1.4. Growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP) per person employed
	1.5. Employment-to-population ratio
	1.6. Proportion of employed people living below $1 (PPP) per day
	1.7. Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment
Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	1.8. Prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age
	1.9. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	
Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	2.1. Net enrolment ratio in primary education
	2.2. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary
	2.3. Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, women and men

Millennium Development Goals	
Goals and targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	*Indicators for monitoring progress*
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	
Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	3.1. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
	3.2. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
	3.3. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	
Target 4.A: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-5 mortality rate	4.1. Under-5 mortality rate
	4.2. Infant mortality rate
	4.3. Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	5.1. Maternal mortality ratio
	5.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
	5.3. Contraceptive prevalence rate
Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	5.4. Adolescent birth rate
	5.5. Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits)
	5.6. Unmet need for family planning
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	6.1. HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years
	6.2. Condom use at last high-risk sex
	6.3. Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
	6.4. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years

Millennium Development Goals	
Goals and targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	*Indicators for monitoring progress*
Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it	6.5. Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs
Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	6.6. Incidence and death rates associated with malaria
	6.7. Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets and proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate antimalarial drugs
	6.8. Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
	6.9. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	
Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	7.1. Proportion of land area covered by forest
	7.2. Carbon dioxide emissions, total, per capita and per $ GDP (PPP), and consumption of ozone-depleting substances
	7.3. Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits
	7.4. Proportion of total water resources used
Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss	7.5. Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected
	7.6. Proportion of species threatened with extinction
Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	7.7. Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source
	7.8. Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility
Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers	7.9. Proportion of urban population living in slums[b]

Millennium Development Goals	
Goals and targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	*Indicators for monitoring progress*

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction — both nationally and internationally

Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries

Includes: tariff and quota-free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance (ODA) for countries committed to poverty reduction

Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)

Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries, Africa, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

Official development assistance (ODA)

8.1. Net ODA, total and to the least developed countries, as percentage of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee donors' gross national income

8.2. Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)

8.3. Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied

8.4. ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes

8.5. ODA received in small island developing States as a proportion of their gross national incomes

Market access

8.6. Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty

8.7. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries

Millennium Development Goals	
Goals and targets (from the Millennium Declaration)	*Indicators for monitoring progress*
	8.8. Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product
	8.9. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity
	Debt sustainability
	8.10. Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)
	8.11. Debt relief committed under HIPC and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiatives
	8.12. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services
Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries	8.13. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis
Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications	8.14. Telephone lines per 100 population
	8.15. Cellular subscribers per 100 population
	8.16. Internet users per 100 population

[a] For monitoring country poverty trends, indicators based on national poverty lines should be used, where available.

[b] The actual proportion of people living in slums is measured by a proxy, represented by the urban population living in households with at least one of the following four characteristics: (a) lack of access to improved water supply; (b) lack of access to improved sanitation; (c) overcrowding (three or more persons per room); and (d) dwellings made of non-durable material.

Annex II

Assessment of country data availability in the Millennium Development Goals indicators database

1. Table 1 presents the country data availability by goal in the Millennium Development Goals indicators database. The information is based only on the "official" Millennium Development Goals indicators, with information, as of November 2007, for a total of 163 countries in the developing regions.

Table 1
Country data availability in the Millennium Development Goals indicators database

Millennium Development Goals	*Indicators*	*All data, including estimates*				*Countries with at least 2 data points, excluding modelled data by agency*	
		Countries with at least 1 data point		*Countries with at least 2 data points*			
		Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Goal 1	Population below $1 (PPP) per day, percentage	70	43	57	35	57	35
	Poverty gap ratio at $1 a day (PPP), percentage	70	43	56	34	56	34
	Poorest quintile's share in national income or consumption, percentage	79	48	58	36	58	36
	Children under 5 moderately or severely underweight, percentage	113	69	72	44	72	44
	Population undernourished, percentage	121	74	121	74	121	74
Goal 2	Total net enrolment ratio in primary education, both sexes	152	93	123	75	123	75
	Percentage of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary, both sexes	152	93	104	64	104	64
	Primary completion rate, both sexes	152	93	129	79	129	79
Goal 3	Literacy rates of 15-24 years old, both sexes, percentage	112	69	63	39	47	29
	Gender Parity Index in primary-level enrolment	152	93	144	88	144	88
	Gender Parity Index in secondary-level enrolment	152	93	142	87	142	87
	Gender Parity Index in tertiary-level enrolment	152	93	114	70	114	70
	Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	149	91	100	61	100	61
	Seats held by women in national parliament, percentage	134	82	134	82	134	82

Millennium Development Goals	Indicators	All data, including estimates				Countries with at least 2 data points, excluding modelled data by agency	
		Countries with at least 1 data point		Countries with at least 2 data points			
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Goal 4	Children under 5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births	138	85	138	85	138	85
	Infant mortality rate (0-1 year) per 1,000 live births	138	85	138	85	138	85
	Children 1 year old immunized against measles, percentage	139	85	139	85	139	85
Goal 5	Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births	133	82	131	80	63	39
	Births attended by skilled health personnel, percentage	138	85	24	15	24	15
Goal 6	People living with HIV, 15-49 years old, percentage	117	72	98	60	98	60
	Condom use to overall contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, percentage	109	67	78	48	78	48
	Condom use at last high-risk sex, 15-24 years old, men, percentage	39	24	19	12	19	12
	Condom use at last high-risk sex, 15-24 years old, women, percentage	48	29	22	13	22	13
	Men 15-24 years old with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS, percentage	37	23	7	4	7	4
	Women 15-24 years old with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS, percentage	62	38	0	0	0	0
	Contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, any method, percentage	111	68	82	50	82	50
	Ratio of school attendance rate of orphans to school attendance rate of non-orphans	63	39	35	21	35	21
	Children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets, percentage	49	30	8	5	8	5
	Children under 5 with fever being treated with antimalarial drugs, percentage	48	29	12	7	12	7
	Tuberculosis death rate per 100,000 population	162	99	155	95	155	95
	Tuberculosis prevalence rate per 100,000 population	162	99	155	95	155	95
	Tuberculosis treatment success rate under the directly observed treatment short course (DOTS), percentage	30	18	23	14	23	14
	Tuberculosis detection rate under DOTS, percentage	162	99	143	88	143	88

Millennium Development Goals	*Indicators*	*All data, including estimates*				*Countries with at least 2 data points, excluding modelled data by agency*	
		Countries with at least 1 data point		*Countries with at least 2 data points*			
		Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Goal 7	Land area covered by forest, percentage	158	97	155	95	155	95
	Protected area to total surface area, percentage	135	83	132	81	132	81
	Carbon dioxide emissions, metric tons of carbon dioxide per capita	150	92	150	92	150	92
	Consumption of all ozone-depleting substances in ODP metric tons	136	83	135	83	135	83
	Proportion of the population using improved drinking water sources, total	162	99	110	67	110	67
	Proportion of the population using improved sanitation facilities, total	162	99	104	64	104	64
	Slum population as percentage of urban, percentage	158	97	105	64	105	64
Goal 8	Debt service as percentage of exports of goods and services and net income from abroad	145	89	107	66	107	66
	Youth unemployment rate, aged 15-24, both sexes	89	55	65	40	65	40
	Youth unemployment rate, aged 15-24, women	88	54	63	39	63	39
	Youth unemployment rate, aged 15-24, men	88	54	63	39	63	39
	Telephone lines per 100 population	157	96	157	96	0	0
	Cellular subscribers per 100 population	157	96	156	96	0	0
	Internet users per 100 population	153	94	151	93	0	0
	Personal computers per 100 population	126	77	123	75	123	75

2. The indicators presented in table 1 have been grouped into four clusters, defined on the basis of country coverage:

(a) Indicators for which less than 25 per cent of the countries in developing regions have at least two data points, excluding modelled data by agency (see table 2). These are indicators on which few countries collect data for their national monitoring on a regular basis

Table 2

Indicators in cluster (a)	All data including estimates modelled by agencies: Countries with at least 1 data point — Number	Percentage	Countries with at least 2 data points — Number	Percentage	Countries with at least 2 data points, excluding estimates modelled by agencies — Number	Percentage
Women 15-24 years old with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS, percentage	62	38	0	0	0	0
Telephone lines per 100 population	157	96	157	96	0	0
Cellular subscribers per 100 population	157	96	156	96	0	0
Internet users per 100 population	153	94	151	93	0	0
Men 15-24 years old with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS, percentage	37	23	7	4	7	4
Children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets, percentage	49	30	8	5	8	5
Children under 5 with fever being treated with antimalarial drugs, percentage	48	29	12	7	12	7
Condom use at last high-risk sex, 15-24 years old, men, percentage	39	24	19	12	19	12
Condom use at last high-risk sex, 15-24 years old, women, percentage	48	29	22	13	22	13
Tuberculosis treatment success rate under DOTS, percentage	30	18	23	14	23	14
Births attended by skilled health personnel, percentage	138	85	24	15	24	15
Ratio of school attendance rate of orphans to school attendance rate of non-orphans	63	39	35	21	35	21

(b) Indicators for which between 25 per cent and 49 per cent of the countries in developing regions have at least two data points, excluding modelled data by agency (see table 3)

Table 3

Indicators in cluster (b)	All data including estimates modelled by agencies: Countries with at least 1 data point — Number	Percentage	All data including estimates modelled by agencies: Countries with at least 2 data points — Number	Percentage	Countries with at least 2 data points, excluding estimates modelled by agencies — Number	Percentage
Literacy rates of 15-24 years old, both sexes, percentage	112	69	63	39	47	29
Poverty gap ratio at $1 a day (PPP), percentage	70	43	56	34	56	34
Population below $1 (PPP) per day, percentage	70	43	57	35	57	35
Poorest quintile's share in national income or consumption, percentage	79	48	58	36	58	36
Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births	133	82	131	80	63	39
Youth unemployment rate, aged 15-24, both sexes	89	55	65	40	65	40
Youth unemployment rate, aged 15-24, women	88	54	63	39	63	39
Youth unemployment rate, aged 15-24, men	88	54	63	39	63	39
Children under 5 moderately or severely underweight, percentage	113	69	72	44	72	44
Condom use to overall contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, percentage	109	67	78	48	78	48

(c) Indicators for which between 50 per cent and 74 per cent of the countries in developing regions have at least two data points, excluding modelled data by agency (see table 4)

Table 4

Indicators in cluster (c)	All data including estimates modelled by agencies: Countries with at least 1 data point — Number	Percentage	All data including estimates modelled by agencies: Countries with at least 2 data points — Number	Percentage	Countries with at least 2 data points, excluding estimates modelled by agencies — Number	Percentage
Contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, any method, percentage	111	68	82	50	82	50
People living with HIV, 15-49 years old, percentage	117	72	98	60	98	60
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	149	91	100	61	100	61
Percentage of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary, both sexes	152	93	104	64	104	64
Proportion of the population using improved sanitation facilities, total	162	99	104	64	104	64
Slum population as percentage of urban, percentage	158	97	105	64	105	64
Debt service as percentage of exports of goods and services and net income from abroad	145	89	107	66	107	66

Indicators in cluster (c)	All data including estimates modelled by agencies: Countries with at least 1 data point — Number	Percentage	Countries with at least 2 data points — Number	Percentage	Countries with at least 2 data points, excluding estimates modelled by agencies — Number	Percentage
Proportion of the population using improved drinking water sources, total	162	99	110	67	110	67
Gender parity index in tertiary-level enrolment	152	93	114	70	114	70
Population undernourished, percentage	121	74	121	74	121	74

(d) Indicators for which between 75 per cent or more of the countries in developing regions have at least two data points, excluding modelled data by agency (see table 5). Indicators in this cluster include some of those based on data from administrative sources — such as on education — and some of the key indicators on health and environment, for which most countries produce data regularly.

Table 5

Indicators in cluster (d)	All data including estimates modelled by agencies: Countries with at least 1 data point — Number	Percentage	Countries with at least 2 data points — Number	Percentage	Countries with at least 2 data points, excluding estimates modelled by agencies — Number	Percentage
Total net enrolment ratio in primary education, both sexes	152	93	123	75	123	75
Personal computers per 100 population	126	77	123	75	123	75
Primary completion rate, both sexes	152	93	129	79	129	79
Protected area to total surface area, percentage	135	83	132	81	132	81
Seats held by women in national parliament, percentage	134	82	134	82	134	82
Consumption of all ozone-depleting substances in ODP metric tons	136	83	135	83	135	83
Children under 5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births	138	85	138	85	138	85
Infant mortality rate (0-1 year) per 1,000 live births	138	85	138	85	138	85
Children 1 year old immunized against measles, percentage	139	85	139	85	139	85
Gender parity index in secondary-level enrolment	152	93	142	87	142	87
Tuberculosis detection rate under DOTS, percentage	162	99	143	88	143	88
Gender parity index in primary-level enrolment	152	93	144	88	144	88
Carbon dioxide emissions, metric tons of carbon dioxide per capita	150	92	150	92	150	92

Indicators in cluster (d)	*All data including estimates modelled by agencies*				*Countries with at least 2 data points, excluding estimates modelled by agencies*	
	Countries with at least 1 data point		*Countries with at least 2 data points*			
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Tuberculosis death rate per 100,000 population	162	99	155	95	155	95
Tuberculosis prevalence rate per 100,000 population	162	99	155	95	155	95
Land area covered by forest, percentage	158	97	155	95	155	95

Technical notes

The following indicators have not been considered in the report because there is no reporting on them:

(a) Notified cases of malaria per 100,000 population;

(b) Malaria death rate per 100,000 population;

(c) Population with access to essential drugs.

The following indicators have not been considered in the report because they are used only at the aggregate level (no country data):

(a) Average tariffs on (i) textiles; (ii) clothing; and (iii) agricultural products;

(b) Developed country imports from developing countries and from least developed countries, admitted duty free.

Indicators under Goal 8 referring to ODA and debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative have not been considered in the report.

Annex III

Summary of the recommendations by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group at its 12th meeting, held in Paris from 14 to 16 November 2007

1. The 12th meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Millennium Development Goals Indicators was organized in two parts. The first part was held on 14 November 2007 and was attended by 31 experts from 14 agencies and 3 regional commissions. The second part was held on 15 and 16 November and was attended by 17 representatives of national statistical offices from 14 countries, 45 experts from 18 agencies, 4 regional commissions, 2 representatives from donor agencies and 1 representative from the European Commission.

2. The first part of the meeting:

(a) Agreed on the numbering of targets and indicators for the new Millennium Development Goal framework;

(b) Provided recommendations for improving the coordination between regional commissions and international agencies;

(c) Proposed new Millennium Development Goals outputs for 2008 and outlined the timeline for the 2008 Goals outputs;

(d) Agreed on a provisional workplan and timeline for the completion of an updated version of the Handbook on Millennium Development Goals Indicators;

(e) Reviewed and provided directions for the work of the SDMX-Millennium Development Goals and the progress chart task teams;

(f) Reviewed metadata availability on the Millennium Development Goals website;

(g) Discussed plans for the next Inter-Agency and Expert Group meeting, to be held tentatively in March 2008, with the main objectives of finalizing the outline of the Handbook on Millennium Development Goals Indicators and agreeing on the list and content of the 2008 Goals outputs.

3. The second part of the meeting, attended by country representatives:

(a) Reviewed and discussed the role of the regional agencies in addressing the differences between national and international data and identified ways to reduce these discrepancies;

(b) Reviewed and discussed national reporting mechanisms to provide data from countries to international agencies;

(c) Discussed strategies to improve the availability of reliable Millennium Development Goals data at the subnational level;

(d) Reviewed metadata presented in the mdgs.un.org database and made recommendations for the revision of the Handbook on Millennium Development Goals Indicators.

4. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group reviewed the results of a survey on coordination of reporting mechanisms carried out among international agencies and countries participating in the meeting and recommended that:

(a) The number of duplicated requests received by countries from international agencies should be reduced;

(b) Differences among countries in institutional arrangements for reporting data should be taken into account in the strategies for improving coordination of reporting;

(c) The questionnaire used for the survey on coordination of reporting mechanisms should be improved, with clearer questions and allowing more time for countries to reply. The revised questionnaire should also include questions on coordination in reporting of data for Millennium Development Goals country reports to the team responsible for its production. After the questionnaire is revised, the survey should be extended to countries outside the Group;

(d) The Statistical Division should take the lead in organizing a workshop for countries to share experiences on coordination of statistical systems, with the objective of identifying best practices and working towards the development of guidelines.

5. On the issue of coordination of reporting mechanisms for Millennium Development Goals data, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group also recommended the following:

(a) The coordination of reporting mechanisms for the Millennium Development Goals data should involve the overall national statistical system and the overall reporting of data to international agencies;

(b) The role of the Millennium Development Goals national focal points should be clearly defined in order to facilitate the setting up of mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the Goals. National focal points may have different roles depending on the national arrangements for the production, dissemination and reporting of data. There should also be a system of official national focal points in charge of providing guidance and disseminating data (this would involve sharing information on contact persons in line ministries and explaining data sources);

(c) It is necessary to improve coordination among international agencies to reduce duplicated requests. For example, international agencies could use combined questionnaires;

(d) The implementation of a repository of data on the Millennium Development Goals indicators should include securing the necessary resources and technical expertise and ensuring a strong national capacity to produce reliable data;

(e) There should be improved training for countries on Millennium Development Goals databases, especially DevInfo;

(f) A standardized source of metadata for Millennium Development Goals should be developed and used in countries;

(g) Regional workshops should be held to review recommendations for Millennium Development Goals reporting and standardized country reports. In

addition, the national statistical office should be fully involved in the production of the Millennium Development Goals country reports;

(h) United Nations regional commissions should study the situation in each country in their region in order to assess the statistical capacity of relevant institutions and existing coordination mechanisms within countries.

6. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group also discussed the issue of discrepancies between data at the national and international levels and recommended the following:

(a) The United Nations regional commissions, with the coordination of the Statistics Division and the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which will help establish the contacts with the international agencies, will initiate a study to investigate the reasons for discrepancies between national and international data, and for data gaps, for a group of two or three selected countries in their region. The selected countries should preferably include countries that are a part of the Group. International agencies should collaborate with the regional commissions in helping to understand the causes of data discrepancies. The results of these studies should be reported to the Group meeting on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, planned for November 2008;

(b) The United Nations regional commissions should serve as a bridge between countries and international agencies;

(c) Expert group meetings should be organized to establish strategies for dealing with data discrepancies and data gaps at the national and international levels. These meetings should count on the participation of international agencies, United Nations regional commissions, regional offices of international agencies, national statistical offices and other relevant institutions of the national statistical systems. The Statistics Division and UNDP will work together to organize these meetings;

(d) Technical assistance should be provided to countries in the use of international definitions. Compliance with international definitions will help to harmonize national and international data;

(e) Metadata of nationally produced data should be improved so that users at the international level can understand the methodology behind the data;

(f) Guidelines on the information flow of Millennium Development Goals data should be developed;

(g) International agencies should consult with countries before publishing their data.

7. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group also recognized that subnational data is needed for understanding Millennium Development Goals trends within countries and in order to better allocate resources across different population groups and regional areas. In order to improve the availability of reliable subnational data, the participants recommended the following:

(a) Develop recommendations on the use of censuses to localize the Millennium Development Goals as well as the use of small area estimations when data are not available;

(b) Investigate the availability of subnational data.

8. Finally, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group reviewed the metadata currently available in the Millennium Development Goals database maintained by the Statistics Division (available at http://mdgs.un.org). Experts from countries and international agencies recommended that:

(a) The metadata field explaining reasons for discrepancies between national and international sources should be included in the next revision of the Handbook on Millennium Development Goals Indicators;

(b) The next revision of the Handbook on Millennium Development Goals Indicators should be better disseminated among national statistical offices and Millennium Development Goals country teams.

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Item 4 (o) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: follow-up to Economic and Social Council policy decisions

Policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the present note is submitted to brief the Commission on policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council adopted in 2007 that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission. The note, furthermore, indicates the actions taken and proposed to be taken by the Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division, in an effort to respond to the requests made by the Council. The Commission is invited to take note of the brief contained herein.

I. Follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

1. In its resolution 2007/29, on the role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16, the Economic and Social Council reaffirmed the need to continue to strengthen the Council as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination and thus promote the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Assembly resolutions, in particular

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24) chap. I.A.

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resolutions 50/227, 57/270B and 61/16. The Council noted the completion of the review of their working methods by the functional commissions and other relevant bodies of the Council and also noted the decision by some of the subsidiary bodies to continue to review their methods of work, as mandated in Assembly resolution 57/270 B.

2. In its resolution 2007/29, the Council also recognized the need to further enhance coordination and cooperation between the Council and its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies so as to allow the Council to carry out more effectively its crucial role as the central mechanism for systemwide coordination, while reiterating that, when mandated, the functional commissions should continue to have the primary responsibility for the review and assessment of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields; and it requested the functional commissions, the regional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies of the Council to continue contributing, as appropriate, and in accordance with their respective mandates, to the work of the Council in line with relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular Assembly resolutions 57/270 B and 61/16.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

Meeting of the chairpersons of the functional commissions with the Economic and Social Council

3. The meetings of the chairpersons of the functional commissions with the Council and its Bureau serve to exchange relevant information among the subsidiary bodies and to intensify cooperation with the Council. Two such meetings were held in 2007. The first meeting with the Bureau, held on 15 January 2007 in New York, replaced the previous regular joint bureaux meetings. The Chairman of the Statistical Commission participated in the meeting via video link. On 10 July 2007, the Council held a dialogue with the chairpersons of the functional commissions on the topic "Working together to promote the goals of decent work and full employment for all". A presentation was made by the representative of Mexico, on behalf of the Chairman of the Statistical Commission. The next meeting of the chairpersons of the functional commissions with the Bureau will be held on 29 January 2008.

Development indicators

4. Ever since the Economic and Social Council invited the Statistical Commission to serve as the intergovernmental focal point for the review of indicators used by the United Nations system for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (see Council resolutions 1999/55 and 2000/27), the Commission has been discussing the technical aspects of development indicators on a continuous basis.

5. At its thirty-ninth session, the Commission is considering a report of the Secretary-General on indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (E/CN.3/2008/29) and a report of the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme on Statistics of human development (E/CN.3/2008/11).

Methods of work

6. The Statistical Commission, like the rest of the functional commissions, had reported to the Council the completion of the review of its methods of work in 2005.[1] In particular, the Commission had addressed the issue of more efficient time management. It had also put in place a mechanism to ensure the continuity of its Bureau and cooperation with the Council, including through a standing agenda item on Council decisions. The Commission also enhanced its official programme through panel discussions and other side events during its thirty-eighth session and sixtieth anniversary with multi-stakeholder participation. The Commission has found the procedures satisfactory and it intends to continue to implement and refine them in its thirty-ninth session. In particular, the Bureau has a continued mandate to streamline the agenda.[2]

II. Reform of the Economic and Social Council

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

7. In its resolution 61/16, on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly reaffirmed the role that the Charter of the United Nations and the Assembly had vested in the Economic and Social Council and recognized the need for a more effective Council as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for implementation of the international development goals agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits; also reaffirmed the commitments to enhance the momentum generated by the 2005 World Summit in order to operationalize and implement, at all levels, the commitments in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the 2005 World Summit, in the economic, social and related fields; decided that the Council should hold annual ministerial-level substantive reviews as part of the high-level segment; and requested the Council to urge the functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies and follow-up mechanisms, as appropriate, to contribute, in accordance with their mandates and taking into account their specificity, to the assessment by the Economic and Social Council.

8. The Council adopted its first multi-year work programme for the annual ministerial-level substantive reviews in October 2007. The 2008 review will focus on the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development"; and the 2009 review will focus on the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health". The substantive contributions of the Council's functional commissions and expert bodies are considered essential for the success of the reviews.

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[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 4* (E/2005/24), chap. II, para. 5.

[2] Ibid., *2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. V, para. 3.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

9. The Commission continuously works on all statistical subject-matter areas to improve the availability and quality of baseline statistics. For instance, the items of the provisional agenda of its thirty-ninth session, on health statistics, environmental statistics, environmental accounting (items 4 (a), (j) and (k)), are related to the themes of the annual ministerial-level substantive reviews for 2008 and 2009. Furthermore, as mentioned above (paras. 4 and 5) the Commission is the intergovernmental focal point for the review of indicators used by the United Nations system and accordingly guides the work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, which could feed into the preparation of the annual ministerial-level substantive reviews.

III. Mainstreaming gender perspectives

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

10. In its resolution 2007/33, the Council, reaffirmed its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system; recalled its resolutions 2001/41, 2002/23, 2003/49, 2004/4, 2005/31 and 2006/36; reaffirmed also the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit; and took note with appreciation of the progress and continued efforts made by United Nations entities to address gaps between policy and practice in mainstreaming a gender perspective in their respective fields of work, including through the development of training, methodologies and tools, as described in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2007/64).

11. In 2007, the General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women" (resolution 62/133). In the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to develop and propose a set of possible indicators on violence against women, building on the work undertaken by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, in order to assist States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women, with a view to allowing its consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-second session and by the Statistical Commission at the earliest.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

12. In March 2007, the Statistical Commission held a joint panel discussion with the Commission on the Status of Women on the latter's priority theme for 2007 entitled "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child". The panel discussion, which was part of the interactions between individual functional commissions, was very well received (see A/62/89-E/2007/76).

13. The Economic Commission for Europe, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for

Western Asia, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the Economic Commission for Africa, convened a group of experts in Geneva, from 8 to 10 October 2007, hosted by the Conference of European Statisticians Task Force on violence against women, in order to initiate a discussion on possible indicators on violence against women. Country experts participated in the debate. The results of this effort will be discussed at a joint panel meeting between the Statistical Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women in February 2008. The work of the expert group will also feed into a substantive report on gender statistics to be prepared for the consideration of the Statistical Commission in 2009.

14. The National Institute of Statistics of Italy and the entities of the United Nations system (the Statistics Division, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Population Fund and the Economic Commission for Europe), in collaboration with the World Bank, organized a global forum on gender statistics in Rome from 10 to 12 December 2007. The forum was attended by users and producers of gender statistics and served as a platform for the launch of a global programme to further develop and improve gender statistics.

IV. Follow-up to Council resolutions on strengthening national capacity in statistics and on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

15. Upon the initiative of the Statistical Commission, the Council adopted two resolutions in the past two years, one on strengthening national capacity in statistics (2006/6) and the other on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme (2005/13), in which it requested an intensification of efforts to support national statistical programmes in strengthening their capacity, in the context of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census round and beyond.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

16. The Commission is considering specific follow-up actions to those two resolutions under its agenda items 4 (b) on "Population and housing censuses"; 4 (l) on "Coordination and integration of statistical programmes"; and 4 (n) on "Development indicators". The documentation presented under these items describes in detail activities undertaken by the Statistics Division and by its partner agencies in supporting the 2010 World Population and Housing Census round to improve the coordination of technical cooperation activities and to improve the availability and quality of development indicators.

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Item 4 (p) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: principles governing international statistical activities

Implementation of principles governing international statistical activities

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-seventh session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the information note prepared by the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities on implementation of principles governing international statistical activities. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

Information note of the Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities on implementation of principles governing international statistical activities

1. At its thirty-seventh session, in 2006, the Statistical Commission welcomed the principles governing international statistical activities, which had been prepared and endorsed by the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities. The Commission noted that the Committee had agreed that the principles could be used in different ways by agencies depending on their specific mandate and governance (legal framework). As a follow-up action, the Commission requested the Committee to assess the implementation of the principles and report the results of the assessment to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session.[1]

2. In October 2007, the United Nations Statistics Division, as the secretariat of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, invited all partner

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 4* (E/2006/24), chap I.C, decision 37/110.

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 4* (E/2006/24), chap. I.C, decision 37/110 (e) (i).

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agencies to briefly describe which principles had already been implemented and which areas might require attention in the near future and to provide examples of recent actions taken in support of implementing the principles. The individual institutional self-assessments, as of February 2008, are contained in a background document to the present report. The document summarizes the main findings with respect to the various principles and highlights examples of actions taken to implement specific elements of the principles. It also briefly mentions the areas where, in the view of some agencies, further work is needed.

3. It should be noted that as a first important step to implementation, some agencies undertook the effort to bring the principles to the attention of the higher political levels in their respective institutions, in order to extend the commitment of their organizations beyond the purely technical statistical level. This was the case with the Secretariat, notably the regional commissions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Statistics Division, which sought and obtained in October 2007 the formal endorsement of the principles by the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs.

4. It should also be mentioned that some agencies have their own institutional instruments and processes that are closely related to the content and spirit of the principles. For instance, the International Monetary Fund has the Data Quality Assessment Framework; Eurostat has committed itself to ensuring that the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice are respected. In this context, in October 2007 Eurostat underwent a formal peer review, which covered Eurostat's institutional environment and dissemination practices in line with the common European Statistical System methodology. The peer review report will be published on the Eurostat website.

5. In general and in the context of their institutional settings, agencies expressed in their submissions their continued commitment to the implementation of all 10 principles and related good practices regarding their work in the international arena. Highlights concerning the individual principles are given below.

Principle 1: Relevance, impartiality and equal access
High-quality international statistics, accessible to all, are a fundamental element of global information systems.

6. The most regular consultation with main clients consists usually of a review by an executive board of the various institutional statistical programmes. New consultative initiatives, such as Internet-based user satisfaction surveys, were found to improve the dialogue with key users. Many agencies also reported that they were using the Internet to provide better access to their data. In that context, some agencies recently eliminated the subscription charges for specific databases. Although the trend is towards having more data become publicly available, it is not clear from the agency submissions to what extent all statistics in international organizations are accessible and/or whether access is provided with a timelag as compared with access by internal users.

Principle 2: Professional standards and ethics
To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the highest professional standards.

7. Agencies point out that their staff is bound by the general professional standards and codes of conduct of their organization. Some agencies also refer in this context to the declaration on professional ethics established by the International Statistical Institute.

Principle 3: Accountability and transparency
The public has a right to be informed about the mandates for the statistical work of the organizations.

8. Virtually all agencies report that documents concerning their programme meetings, including those concerning their decisions, are accessible to the public through their websites.

Principle 4: Prevention of misuse
Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users.

9. Agencies state that systematic reviews of the methodologies are employed, references of the sources of data in current and non-recurrent publications are clearly identified and users are given methodological explanations when source data are adjusted or imputed. Information on the original sources of the data disseminated, as well as source concepts, definitions, classifications, methods and procedures, is made available to the extent possible in the notes/technical notes of the outputs. Various agencies are in the process of codifying their operating procedures as part of explicitly formulated quality management frameworks.

Principle 5: Sources of official statistics
Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimize the reporting burden for data providers.

10. Several agencies report safeguards before sending out new questionnaires. Furthermore, in an effort to minimize the reporting burden on countries, numerous examples of bilateral and multilateral data-sharing arrangements are mentioned. The work of international agencies on the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange should further facilitate the flow of data among the organizations.

Principle 6: Confidentiality
Individual data collected about natural persons and legal entities, or about small aggregates that are subject to national confidentiality rules, are to be kept strictly confidential and are to be used exclusively for statistical purposes or for purposes mandated by legislation.

11. For most agencies and international organizations the principle is not relevant since they do not collect, either directly or indirectly, individual data about natural persons or legal entities.

Principle 7: Regulations and measures
Erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics are to be immediately and appropriately addressed.

12. To reduce the risk of erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics, some agencies report special efforts to communicate with users and user groups providing, for instance, informative guides targeting different types of users.

Principle 8: Regional coordination
Standards for national and international statistics are to be developed on the basis of sound professional criteria, while also meeting the test of practical utility and feasibility.

13. Standards are developed through extensive consultations with member States and international agencies, including bilateral contacts, meetings of experts, technical expert groups and web forums. Furthermore, most agencies, involved in the development of standards, also report that they provide technical assistance on the implementation of international standards and monitor their implementation.

Principle 9: Use of international standards
Coordination of international statistical programmers is essential to strengthening the quality, coherence and governance of international statistics, and avoiding duplication of work.

14. Statistical units of the agencies and international organizations participate regularly in the meetings of the Statistical Commission, and in regional and specialized meetings on specific subjects in order to coordinate their statistical programmes and consult on joint activities.

Principle 10: International cooperation
Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the professional growth of the statisticians involved and to the improvement of statistics in the organizations and in countries.

15. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities is currently developing tools through a number of task teams on how to improve the effective coordination of the technical cooperation activities of international organizations. Some agencies also report the creation of websites, which contain information on the development of national statistical systems and which are designed to create platforms for the exchange of information and knowledge.

16. The following areas have been mentioned as requiring more attention:

(a) Formulation of data quality frameworks for all agencies and further alignment among them, building on the extensive work done within the Committee in the past two years with respect to documenting and developing data quality frameworks by international organizations;

(b) Continued improvement of the effective coordination of technical cooperation activities by international agencies;

(c) Better coordination of statistical activities within some international organizations;

(d) Development of more educational material for users, to avoid erroneous interpretation and misuse of data;

(e) Further training and strengthening of the human resources in the statistical units of the international organizations.

17. The Statistical Commission is invited to take note of the continued commitment and efforts of agencies to implement the principles governing international statistical activities.